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THE CHURCHES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

GEORGE W. McDANIEL, D.D., LL.D.

THE CHURCHES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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BY

GEORGE W. McDANIEL, D.D., LL.D.
Author of "The People Called Baptists," "Our Boys in France," "A Memorial Wreath."

RICHARD R. SMITH, INC.
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THE CHURCHES OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT. II

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TO

MY BELOVED CHURCH

THE FIRST BAPTIST
OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

INTRODUCTION

This book was conceived twenty years ago in my first pastorate, the First Baptist Church of Temple, Texas. It was in contemplation two years in my second pastorate, Gaston Avenue Baptist, Dallas, Texas, and has been waiting fifteen years longer in Richmond, Virginia, for the time to clothe itself in written form. Denominational, civic, and pastoral duties closed every door of opportunity for the proper preparation of the manuscript. Two smaller books, born of special providences, preceded this one. The summer of 1920 was solemnly set apart for the purpose of writing this book. Because of unexpected and unavoidable interruptions it then became evident that the book would never be written if it awaited a time of leisure. All the while its message was sounding in my soul. One day the voice said, "Let me speak amidst the distracting voices of daily duties and in the quiet hours of the night while other voices are hushed in sleep." In this way the manuscript was finally prepared.

"The Church" and "The New Testament Church," whatever those terms may mean, have been the subjects of treatment by several authors. These books, for the most part, leave me where Tacitus left his hero—in the middle of the bridge. The Seven Churches of Asia addressed by the Spirit in the book of Revelation are the theme of several interesting volumes. A discussion of the most im-

portant churches of the New Testament, those which figured in the inauguration and propagation of Christianity, which occupied the major part of the history of the Acts, and which called forth the great epistles of Paul, has never been presented in a single volume. The aim of this book is to show the origin, character, principles, and practices of the New Testament churches; to show the unity which existed in essentials amidst the variety of material and diversity of environment; to point morals and deduce lessons for twentieth century pastors, laymen, and churches.

Some difficulty was encountered in deciding the order of the last eight chapters. The first three, logically, chronologically, and geographically, came in the order arranged in the book. After canvassing, in turn, the doctrinal, historical, and geographical plans, it was decided to follow the geographical plan of arrangement, that is, beginning from Jerusalem, and taking them in order until we reach Rome. There were *several* possible geographical arrangements of Galatia, Ephesus, and Colosse, but the one adopted seems simplest. In the last chapter, on Miscellaneous Churches, it was, obviously, best to arrange them as they appear in that chapter.

It would be too much to hope that this book is free from mistakes. Where so many dates and details are involved error is humanly almost inevitable. However, it is believed that accuracy obtains in general, and attention to any error in particular will be gratefully received.

Nor is it expected that all readers will agree with my interpretations. I have followed no author in particular, but have sought to set forth my views, founded upon my study of the New Testament and

upon investigations of other authors upon the subject. The American Bible Union Version of the New Testament, as revised by Hovey, Broadus, and Weston, is the basis, but not exclusively, of this study. Other versions,—King James, The Revised, Weymouth's and Moffett's translations,—were used wherever it was thought they better conveyed the meaning. In so far as others may differ with me, I crave that same charity which I accord to all conscientious students of God's Word.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	The Meaning of the Word "Church"	15
II	Jerusalem—The Mother Church	31
III	Antioch—The Missionary Church	53
IV	The Churches of Galatia—The Unstable Churches	76
V	Ephesus—The Effective Church	98
VI	Colosse—The Heretical Church	127
VII	Philippi—The Joyful Church	155
VIII	Thessalonica—The Expectant Church	181
IX	Corinth—The Worldly Church	203
X	Rome—The Renowned Church	230
XI	Certain Other Churches	259
XII	Table Showing Christian Meaning of Ecclesia	296

THE CHURCHES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE CHURCHES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

CHAPTER I

THE MEANING OF THE WORD "CHURCH"

The original word *ecclesia,* translated "church," occurs three times in Matthew, twenty-three times in the Acts, sixty-two times in Paul's letters, twice in Hebrews, once in James, three times in the third epistle of John, and twenty times in Revelation. Jesus did not coin this word—*ecclesia.* He found it in common use, as John the Baptist did proselyte baptism, and employed what was at hand.

Among the Greeks, *ecclesia* was the assembly of the citizens of a free city-state gathered by a herald blowing a horn through the streets of a town. In this sense, the word is used once in the New Testament (Acts 19:39). The town clerk advised Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen to submit the case of Paul and his companions to the Greek *ecclesia.*

Among the Hebrews, *ecclesia* was the congregation of Israel assembled before the Tabernacle in the wilderness by the blowing of a silver trumpet. In this sense the word is used twice in the New Testament (Acts 7:38; Heb. 2:12). Stephen, rehearsing the history of Israel, says Christ was in the *ecclesia* in the wilderness. The writer to the Hebrews quotes a typico-prophetic Psalm by David where the sense

is "congregation" (Psalm 22:20). Israel in the land of Canaan is never called a church.

Both with the Greeks and the Jews the word denoted an assembly of the people, not of a committee or council.

Among the early Christians *ecclesia* conveyed the same general idea of "called out" and, in addition, "collected unto Christ." As there were three general usages of the word, viz.: the Greek, the Hebrew, and the Christian, so, in the Christian usage there were three ideas, viz.: an institution, a particular congregation, and the redeemed of all time.

For centuries controversy has raged around the meaning of "church" in the New Testament. The views of many Christians upon this subject are hazy and contradictory. That keen intellect, Frederick W. Robertson, was so warped by episcopal predilection, and was under such traditional bias that he said: "When the Baptists or the Independents, or any other sectarians, unite themselves with men holding the same faith and entertaining the same opinions, there may be a *sect,* a *combination,* a *persuasion,* but a *church* there cannot be." One may not dogmatize where there is such wide divergence among good and scholarly brethren. However, a threefold meaning of *ecclesia* is the one which most commends itself to my thinking and to which, after much study and with the present light, I subscribe.

The table in the appendix of this book contains every New Testament passage where *ecclesia* is used with a *Christian* meaning and indicates my interpretation of the three conceptions. The student is referred to that table.

Be it noted that the Jewish congregation, or

assembly, is referred to in Acts 7:38 and Heb. 2:12; an unlawful assembly, in Acts 19:32, 41; a lawful assembly, in Acts 19:39. Hence, those five instances of *ecclesia* are omitted from the appended list. Acts 2:47 is omitted because the word *ecclesia* does not appear in the best texts. *Ecclesia* occurs, then, one hundred and fourteen times in the New Testament and one hundred and nine times it has a Christian significance. As to the classification: Acts 9:31 is listed as local, meaning the Jerusalem church which had been scattered abroad by the persecution of Saul of Tarsus. The two-fold classification in Ephesians is not arbitrary but harmonizes with Paul's unmistakable practice in Colossians where he used "church" both in a general and a particular sense. Our Lord set the precedent for such a style of writing by passing almost imperceptibly from a discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem to a discussion of His second coming and the end of the world (Luke 21:20-28). The classified summary of Christian usages is (1) As an institution, fourteen. (2) As a local congregation, ninety-three. (3) As all the redeemed, two.

Consider, somewhat in detail, the three Christian significations of the term "church." First: an *institution.* "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). Jesus never built but one thing after He quit the carpenter's shop in Nazareth. That was His church. The emphatic word is the pronoun "my" which distinguishes Christ's church from the Greek and Hebrew assemblies. Adjectives are never used in the New Testament to define "church." Universal, invisible, spiritual, catholic, are human, not inspired, appellatives. This divine institution depends in a very important sense upon

man confessing. Not merely upon the man Peter, as held by Romanists, nor upon the confession alone, as held by some Protestants; but upon the man who confessed the essential deity of Jesus. This confession was an exercise of the heart rather than of the intellect. As the Scripture saith: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." We *con*fess Christ; we *pro*fess a religion. It was not Peter's mere intellectual perception of the Christ which our Lord commended. What Peter did and what he said was under the illumination of the Holy Spirit. "Flesh and blood did not reveal it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven," was Jesus' way of saying that divine power worked on Peter enabling him to make the good confession. "No man can say Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit" (I Cor. 12:3). The church as an institution has always been composed of frail human material like Peter who, by the Holy Spirit, acknowledged Jesus to be the unique Son of God. To this institution and its representatives was committed the authority to announce the terms, or conditions, upon which God would forgive sins. The same power conferred on Peter was conferred upon the ten apostles in John 20:23, and upon the whole church in Matt. 18:18.

The Romanist doctrine of a universal church endowed with the power of binding and loosing is absent from the scriptures. Indeed, the word *catholikos* is not found in the New Testament, nor in the Septuagint—the Greek Old Testament. In post apostolic times *catholikos* was inserted in the titles of certain books; for example, "The First General Epistle of Peter." Peter would never have

given that heading to his letter for in the first two verses he specifically confines his message to: (1) the Jews; (2) the elect Jews; (3) the elect Jews of the dispersion; (4) the elect Jews of the dispersion in four provinces of Asia Minor. It is anything else than a catholic epistle. The error is of a similar nature as the man-made titles "Saint Matthew," etc. God providentially preserved the text against these Romanist errors. Those versed in New Testament nomenclature never speak of the apostles as saints, except as all believers are called to be saints. The "Catholic church" is not a biblical term, nor does it appear in the earliest form of the Apostles' Creed.

Jesus had in mind an institution when He said: "Tell it to the church . . . If he will not hear the church," (Matt. 18:17f). The presidency of the United States is an institution established in Article II, Section I of the Constitution before there was a president. There have been twenty-eight presidents but only one presidency, as an institution. Perhaps a more apt analogy is the jury system. Amendment VI to the Federal Constitution provides for trial by jury in all criminal prosecutions. The accused is guaranteed a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury. That is to say; this amendment established the jury system as an institution just as Jesus established His church as an institution. In practical application the jury as an institution finds expression in a local jury which tries the accused. Likewise, the church as an institution takes concrete shape in a local congregation in a given community.

The figure of a building was used for the church as an institution. A building is never called a local

church in the New Testament, though such usage is now current. Looked at as an institution figured by a building, the fundamentals are: (1) Christ is the designer. He designs it for Kingdom purposes; (2) He is the architect. He specifies the material which goes into the building. (3) He is the builder. He selects the material which fits into the specifications. (4) He is the foundation. Other foundation can no man lay. (5) He is the owner. "My church" is the title to ownership. (6) He is the occupant. He inhabits the building by the Holy Spirit.

The figure of an organism was used for the church as an institution. Looked at as an institution, figured by an organism, the thoughts are: (1) Christ is the head. His rulership is exercised through his only vicar, the Holy Spirit. The assumption by a mere man of this sovereignty is blasphemy. (2) The church is Christ's body. That body is vitally connected with the head and draws its life from that source. Cut off the head and the body is dead. (3) Christ is also "head over all things to the church." He exercises all power in the universe in behalf of the church. (4) The church expresses Christ's fullness. As Christ conveys the conception of God's nature, so the church conveys the conception of Christ's love, authority, power, glory.

We now pass on to the second significance of the term "church": a *particular congregation.* This is the predominant use in the New Testament. It means the regenerate persons in a locality who unite themselves voluntarily together, in conformity with Christ's laws, for establishing His kingdom in the earth. Membership in a church is not hereditary, like membership in a family or state, but is optional.

The earliest churches probably met in private homes. The Lord's Supper was observed in these house-churches (Acts 2:46). The primitive church met in the house of Mary, mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12); and in the house of James, brother of Jesus (Acts 21:18). Paul sent salutations to at least three house-churches: to the church meeting in the house of Aquila and Priscilla (Rom. 16:5); to that meeting in the house of Nymphas (Col. 4:15); to that meeting in the house of Philemon at Colosse (Phil. 2). Gaius was "host of the whole church." Possibly three other house-churches are referred to in Rom. 16:14, 15 and I Cor. 16:15. It was perfectly natural for congregations to meet in private houses. Many a church in modern times has begun in a private dwelling. The First Baptist Church of Richmond was constituted in 1780 with fourteen members who met "in the house of one Franklin" at the northeast corner of Carrington and Pink Streets. Numerous other examples could be cited.

Qualifications for membership in the churches of the New Testament were well defined. Not all residents of a town could participate in the Greek assembly: the members must needs be freemen. Lineal requisites qualified for membership in the Jewish congregation: proselytes must needs be circumcised. A Christian church required faith and baptism in order to membership. It has been stated succinctly as faith-baptism. A New Testament *ecclesia* was not identical with the Jewish *ecclesia* and the terms of admission were entirely different. The question of open church membership was not raised for the very simple reason that different denominations did not exist. Departure from the early

inspired principles and polity is the source of that vexatious question. But one safe course is to be pursued—strict adherence to the divine order. This is not unbrotherly. A member of the Knights of Pythias is not eligible to membership among Masons by virtue of his membership in the Pythians, and *vice versa*. Every secret order has its own initiation. This is not to say they do not esteem and love the other orders. Members of one lodge pass to other similar lodges without a new initiation. So, with Baptists to-day.

The *form of government* of these local churches was congregational. One church having authority over another church, or one man, or group of men, exercising jurisdiction over a church, or a territory of several churches, is foreign to the New Testament. Those nearest Christ interpreted him as placing authority in the membership of the churches. Witness the nomination of Matthias by the "one hundred and twenty" (Acts 1:15-22); the choosing of the seven by "the multitude of the disciples" (Acts 6:2); the appointment of Barnabas as a committee by "the church which was in Jerusalem" (Acts 11:22); the setting apart of Barnabas and Saul by the church at Antioch (Acts 13:13); the election of the presbyters by the vote of the churches (Acts 14:23); the sending of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem on the circumcision controversy by the church at Antioch (Acts 15:3); the sending of chosen men to Antioch "by the apostles and elders, with the whole church" (Acts 15:22); the taking of apostles even to task and passing judgment on their conduct and the recognition by apostles of the supremacy of the local assembly (Acts 11:1-18); the abundant proofs of the congregation's control

of its own affairs in exercising discipline (I Cor. 5:4); and appointing a traveling representative with Paul (II Cor. 8:19).

From these scriptures it is evident that a particular assembly was self-governing. There was no apostolic hierarchy even when and where the inspired apostles were present. Jesus safe-guarded his churches against the peril of the episcopal form of government, viz., autocracy; and against the peril of the presbyterian form of government, viz., oligarchy; by establishing a democratic form of government in which the government was of the people, for the people, and by the people.

The local church is fundamental in the propagation of the gospel. A clear understanding of a gospel church is so important that I venture to consider the subject from a slightly different viewpoint than the one just presented. Take this definition: A gospel church is an organized body of baptized believers equal in rank and privileges, administering its affairs under the headship of Christ, united in the belief of what He has taught, covenanting to do what He has commanded, and coöperating with other like bodies in Kingdom movements. Analyze this definition.

1. An organized body. A church is not a mob, or a mass meeting. It is more than a congregation. John the Baptist preached to multitudes and many of them followed his teaching but they were not a church. They were unorganized. Jesus began the first Christian church with two of John's disciples. He gathered others and worked the material into an organization. This organization He filled with power on Pentecost. Wherever in the course of his missions Paul planted the Gospel, he never

counted his work complete until he had organized a church and ordained pastors by a democratic procedure of election by "show of hands." (See David Smith's Life and Letters of Paul, page 105.) A building is not essential to the existence of a church, but organization is. The building is useful, the organization, indispensable. Immediately after a group of people come together for the purpose of constituting a church, they adopt certain principles as their binding and controlling bonds. They then select their officers and perfect such organization as may promote efficiency.

2. A body of baptized believers. Baptism means baptism. The Greek word was not translated in the King James or Revised Versions; it was anglicized. Had the original been translated it must necessarily have been "immerse," as in the Bible Union New Testament. The meaning of the word, the description of the administration, the symbolism of the ordinance, the uniform practice of the early fathers, all unite in emphasizing immersion, and immersion only, as Christian baptism. This baptism is for believers—those who have exercised saving faith in Jesus Christ. John the Baptist demanded a change of heart before he would baptize those who came to him. Jesus commanded that discipling should precede baptism. Those who "gladly received His word" were baptized by Peter and his co-laborers. Philip ascertained that the Eunuch believed before he baptized him. Paul's converts, even the households, are described as believers. Without a single exception, baptism in the New Testament was always upon a profession of faith. In all the recorded instances faith preceded and baptism followed *immediately.*

This doctrine eliminates infants because they do not need baptism. It eliminates the unconverted because they are unfit for baptism. It includes every one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, and imposes upon every such one a solemn duty to obey.

3. A body equal in rank and privileges. Ruling classes are foreign to a gospel church. Jesus condemned such custom of the Gentiles and said of his people, "it shall not be so among you." Officers are chosen for service not for dictation, for leadership not for lordship. Except as one's character and service may have given him the confidence of his brethren, one has no more influence than another in a New Testament church. His power with his fellow members is not official. Even the pastor, whom the Holy Spirit makes the overseer, cannot exclude the least significant member. As a member of the local church his rank is precisely that of any and every other member. "Orders" in the ministry are unscriptural and "orders" from the pastor are unauthorized.

So with the privileges of individuals,—they are equal. Only in a gospel church is this true. No other denomination, and no civil government, grants equal suffrage to young and old, rich and poor, male and female. Membership in a Baptist church entitles every member to a voice and to a vote. Hence, a Baptist church is a pure democracy; the only one in the world to-day. Of course these privileges are accompanied, as are all privileges, by penalty for their abuse. Democracies have their perils, though they are of a nature different from those to which other governments are subject. Enlightened consciences are the safeguards of Baptist churches.

4. A body administering its own affairs under the headship of Christ. That is to say, a Baptist church governs itself. Its "authority" is limited, however, to the determination of its own membership, the administration of its temporal affairs, and the direction of its own corporate spiritual activities. The form of government is congregational as distinguished from papistical, episcopal, or presbyterian. It has all needed administrative and judicial power. From its decision there is no appeal, since it is both the trial court and the supreme court. It constitutes the judge and the jury. It has no legislative powers. The New Testament is the law and Christ is the law-maker. He is "head over all things to the church." The right for which the small nations, and the oppressed people of the larger nations, have fought, viz.: to determine for themselves their government and officials, has been a fundamental principle in a Baptist church from the very beginning of Christian history. That principle was first expressed in the New Testament and has been recognized as a guiding rule of every Baptist church since that time.

5. A body united in the belief of what Christ has taught. This means the "common faith" which is also the "faith once for all delivered unto the saints." Embraced in it are such doctrines as man's sinful nature and his inability to save himself; God's eternal love for his creatures; Christ's deity and Saviourhood—He was God-man and made atonement for sin; the office and work of the Holy Spirit; escape from the power and penalty of sin by the sinner's repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; Christ's ability and promise to keep those who are saved; the two ordinances

in their proper order and significance; the church as a single, spiritual, democratic group; a heaven of unending service and unalloyed bliss for the saved and a hell of eternal misery and unmitigated suffering for the impenitent.

Baptists may fellowship as Christians those who do not hold to certain of these tenets, but they do not fellowship them as church members. They may be saved and not be in a church. We pass no judgment on their religion; we do adhere to the New Testament in our church fellowship. It follows that an intelligent church member of a Baptist church can never unite with a body that repudiates these doctrines without stultifying his conscience. It also follows that there can never be "organic church union" or even the "interchange of church membership" or "open communion" until "all come into the unity of the faith." "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

6. A body covenanting to do what He has commanded. Here, in addition to doctrine, we come upon deeds. Jesus' repeated, emphatic, inescapable command was to "go," "evangelize," "baptize," and "teach." To omit the "make disciples of all nations" is to take the heart out of the commission. Whoever does so, breaks fellowship with real Baptists and disowns Christ. Therefore, a Baptist church is essentially missionary. Christ's command constitutes its marching orders; His spiritual weapons make up its armor; the "ends of the earth" are its objective.

This principle should be inculcated in all who unite with churches. Too often they are received and neglected until a shock is needed to awaken them to missionary endeavor, as persecution scat-

tered abroad the Jerusalem church. The pity is that some never awake. They live as missionary drones, die unwept by the church and go to wear a starless crown. If their souls are saved "their works perish." They are "saved yet so as by fire." Jesus is saying to some very "orthodox" people: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of the father which is in heaven." "Why call ye me Lord and do not the things I have commanded?"

7. A body coöperating with other like bodies in Kingdom enterprises. The proverb runs: "Birds of a feather will flock together." Like associates with like. This principle determines church membership. It should also determine church coöperation. The principle also preserves and propagates birds, animals, and plants. Those that go or grow in groups crowd the others out and preëmpt the territory. Here is a lesson writ large. "He who runs may read."

Paul commended the Macedonian churches for their readiness to help. He was accompanied by members of coöperating churches who participated in his beneficent work. The task of feeding thousands of poor saints in Jerusalem was too great for any one church, though that church were the generous Gentile church at Antioch. The largeness of the undertaking constituted the challenge: the spirit of service met that challenge in a combined effort. They did "team work."

The third signification of the term "church" is: *the redeemed of all time.* "But ye are to come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to

the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven." (Heb. 12:22f.) All from Adam to Christ who were saved by faith in a coming Messiah, will be members of this church in glory. All from the days of John the Baptist to the second coming of Christ who are saved by faith in the Son of God will be members of this church in glory. All who have died in infancy, and all idiots, are saved by the merits of Christ's death and will be members of this church in glory. This church will have no ordinances, no officers, no organization. The conditions of membership are regeneration, sanctification, glorification. It is future as distinguished from the present church, an institution focalizing and functioning in particular congregations. This church is to be the Lamb's Bride. The marriage will take place at the end of time. When Christ's redeeming work is finished, when all enemies are put under His feet, when death is destroyed, when the bodies of the saints are raised and re-inhabited by their justified spirits, then the glorious church as a beautiful bride, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish, will be presented to Jesus, the Groom (Eph. 5:27). The church as an institution then and there merges into the church in glory. That is in the future. How far we do not know. As we contemplate the wrinkles and blemishes of the churches of the present, the church in glory seems remote.

One other subject remains to be treated: *the distinction between kingdom and church.* Here there is much vague and confused thinking. It will aid in clarifying the situation to bear in mind that the idea contained in *basileia,* kingdom, is different

from the idea contained in *ecclesia*. The kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of Christ are the same in the New Testament. They mean the domain over which Christ reigns and the sovereignty which He exercises in that domain. Sometimes kingdom means the territory, sometimes the reign, sometimes both. The kingdom is larger than the church as a local assembly or an institution. It is in existence now while the church in glory is in the future. In eternity the two may become one. A church is visible, the kingdom is invisible. Churches are organizations the mission of which is to enlarge the kingdom. This they do, (1) by bearing witness to the historic truths of the New Testament; (2) by the proclamation of the gospel among all nations; (3) by the exhibition and inculcation of the principles of Christianity. Not all members of local churches are in the kingdom. Only the really saved are under Christ's rulership. All members of the kingdom will ultimately be members of the church in glory. Not all members of the kingdom are members of local churches. All the saved are not affiliated with the churches, though they ought to be. "Be baptized" is a command for the individual, an act which must be done both by an outward as well as an inward obedience. It is obligatory upon every believer. Jesus' way of saying converted people would unite with a church was that "Men do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but on the lamp-stand; and it shines to all that are in the house." The lamp-stand is the church. "The seven lamp-stands are the seven churches."

CHAPTER II

JERUSALEM—THE MOTHER CHURCH

Passover and Pentecost were the great days with the Jews. Precisely seven weeks intervened between the two. Jesus was crucified the day before the Passover and the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. The things which Jesus did and taught, in the flesh up to the Passover, He continued to do and teach, by the Spirit, through the church after Pentecost. There was an interruption of fifty days. During the first forty days He showed himself to be alive by many infallible proofs, appearing to Mary Magdalene; to other women; to Peter; to the two on the way to Emmaus; to the disciples, with Thomas absent; to the disciples with Thomas present; to the seven beside the sea; to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee; to James; to above five hundred brethren, and to those the day He "was taken up." These appearances brought peace and reassurance to His troubled followers and converted His unbelieving half-brothers. During the last ten days, one hundred and twenty disciples were waiting and preparing for the promise of the Father. They are not *called* a church until Acts 5:11, but *were* a church in essence. The institution which Jesus established first localized and expressed itself in the church at Jerusalem.

1. The membership was cosmopolitan. The small number included all classes and conditions. Estimable ladies like Joanna and Susannah from Herod's court were on an equality with Mary a

carpenter's widow. A distinguished lawyer, Joseph of Arimathea, and an erudite scholar, Nicodemus, fellowshiped and followed Galilean fishermen like Peter and John. Simon the zealot and Matthew the publican dwelt amicably in the same organization. The membership grew rapidly and soon that church enrolled a rich land owner, Joseph of Cyprus, and penniless Greek-speaking Jewish women. No Sadducees believed in Jesus while He lived, but probably Sadducees were among the "great multitude of the priests (who) were obedient to the faith;" if so, converted Pharisees and Sadducees were leveled and united by Christian bonds.

A rich man's church or a poor man's church is anomalous. A church is for no class exclusively. In a local church, as nowhere else on earth, it ought to be true that "The rich and the poor meet together. The Lord is the maker of them all." The brotherhood of man is an impractical dream apart from Christ. He is the only bond of union. In Him all fictitious standards disappear. The fierce lion of passion and anger, and the timid lamb of innocence and helplessness lie down together in Him. His early churches had in them more power for realizing human brotherhood than all the philosophies of the schools and all the governments of the nations.

The clash between classes would be stilled by heeding the voice of Christ "Ye are all brethren." How splendidly the first Christian church demonstrated the Master's teaching! How beautifully His true churches to-day manifest the same truth! On the Sunday evening of the first day of Victory week of the Baptist 75 Million Campaign, the church which had been asked for the largest quota in the

Convention had the amount over-subscribed. The spirit of thanksgiving ran high. The pastor abandoned the regular sermon and called on any laymen, who wished to speak, to do so. Six responded. Two were business men, one was a lawyer, one a professor, one a missionary, and one a laboring man. No speaker repeated what another had said and no one spoke more than six minutes. The last speaker, the laboring man, said: "I should like to say to the new members and strangers that I am about the smallest pebble on this beach. There are men in this church worth millions more than I am, for I am not worth anything; but they treat me as a brother." It was a lovely sentiment and lovelier because it was true. Macaulay, in his Lays of Ancient Rome, over-draws the picture:

"Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great:

Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old."

It would be impossible to overstate the equality of believers and the sense of brotherhood in the Jerusalem church.

2. The government was congregational and democratic. Look at the first chapter of the Acts. The election of a successor to Judas is under consideration. Peter takes the initiative by citing the prophecy of David, applying it to the case in point and stating the qualifications for the office. Inci-

dentally, he says Judas fell from an *office,* not from a state of salvation. Peter does not presume to nominate, much less to appoint the apostle. Eleven apostles are there, but the election is not their prerogative. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is there, but she is ranked no higher than the others. She is not even referred to hereafter in the New Testament. So much for Mariolatry! The record is clear and positive: (1) that the case was submitted to the entire company of men and women; (2) that they nominated Barsabas and Matthias; (3) that they prayed the Lord to show which of the two He did choose; (4) that they wrote "Barsabas" on one table or ball, and "Matthias" on another and put these in an urn and shook them and "Matthias" fell out first. The word for lot is *Kleros,* clergy. From that transaction comes the term "clergy," for ministry. It was the last use of lots by the Christians. The Holy Spirit comes immediately as their guide and they have better means of ascertaining the will of God. Unfortunately the designation "clergy" has survived.

After this church had grown to enormous proportions, the business was conducted in the same democratic way as when it numbered one hundred and twenty. "And the twelve called the *multitude of the disciples to them* and said, It is not proper that we should leave the Word of God, and minister to tables. But, brethren, *look ye out among you* seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint over this business. And we will give ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word. And the saying *pleased the whole multitude.* And *they chose* Stephen . . . whom *they set before* the apostles" (Acts 6:1-6).

Those six verses contain five unmistakable references to the whole congregation of believers and show plainly that the multitude of believers governed themselves. Internal trouble arose and the apostles threw the whole matter upon the church. It was settled by creating an office to care for the temporalities of the church. The seven were not an order in the ministry, but another class of church officers intended to make it possible for the apostles and pastors to devote themselves wholly to prayer and preaching.

James, half-brother of our Lord, became pastor of this first church. The remaining history in Acts is consistent with the record in the first two elections; the church managed its own affairs. The fact of Peter and John going to Samaria does not contravene the doctrine of democracy. They were apostles with special gifts and power, and had no successors. "Apostolic succession" is a vagary; the "historic episcopate" is an unhistoric vestige of Romanism.

3. A six-fold unity characterized the earliest Christian church. (1) A unity of place. "They were all together in one place." A little later all that believed were together. Still later, they were all in Solomon's porch. The members of that congregation had the "church going habit." They continued in it steadfastly. A sadder day had dawned when a writer found it necessary to exhort; "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is." Church-going is a good habit in itself. Many blessings attend it. Deacon John C. Williams of Richmond was a regular attendant upon all the services of his church. He walked four-fifths the distance around the globe

going to and from the First Baptist Church. A son-in-law once asked him, as he started to prayer meeting on an inclement evening: "Mr. Williams, do you always feel like going to church?" "No, not always, but I make it a rule to go always because I ought. Most of the time it is a delight; sometimes, a duty."

(2) A unity of purpose. "They were all of one accord." Their minds were concentrated on one thing,—the coming of the promised Paraclete. Curiosity prompted them to ask: "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus sternly rebuked their curiosity. It was not for them to know the *chronos,* long period, nor the *kairos,* short period. The important thing for them was equipment for service. "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Bidden to tarry until the Comforter came, they obeyed implicitly and unitedly. They knew what they needed and agreed in that knowledge. Day after day passed without a sign of fulfillment; but they stayed together. As far as I know, the Spirit comes not upon a divided church. Oh, for that oneness of purpose! Better fewer members in harmony and singleness of heart than large numbers rent by dissension and torn by discord. "Of one mind in the Lord," "keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace," are evidences of the strength of a church.

(3) A unity of prayer. "These all continued with one accord in prayer." It was a praying church. Ten days were well spent in a prayer service. Sixty times two were "agreed on earth as touching" one thing. God was more ready to bless than they were to receive. Prayer prepared them to receive. This

prayer-habit became fixed. They were constantly attending on the prayers (Acts 2:42). They live greatly who pray habitually. Troubles came. The Sanhedrin inhibited preaching. The disciples betook themselves to prayer. They asked God to help them to do their part, knowing full well that He would do His part (Acts 4:23-31). By prayer the church triumphed over religious persecution. Troubles thicken. One apostle is contemptuously cut off and another is in prison. The church finds its recourse in unceasing prayer (Acts 12:5, 12). God delivered Peter from the prison and from the soldiers. By prayer this church triumphed over state persecution.

Good singing adds to the interest of a service. Good scripture reading is instructive. Good preaching is winning. Good praying is the most effective of all. It is the mightiest force a church can employ. Forget not Tennyson's lines:

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let
thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
prayer
Both for themselves and those who call
them friend?"

Remember the five young Americans in the haystack prayer meeting. Remember the prayers of Hudson Taylor's mother for her wayward son.

(4) A unity of power. "Tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them." Not tongues of fire. They could not have endured fire. Tongues like fire,

parting asunder as flames of fire. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues." This experience was common to all. What was lost at Babel was regained at Pentecost. Jesus had kept His word, their prayers were answered. Evidences of the Spirit's presence were *external.* (a) There was the sound of a wind, indicative of the pervasive, life-bringing power of the Spirit. "The wind blows where it will, and thou hearest the sound of it, but knowest not whence it comes and whither it goes. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." Their ears heard the sound. (b) There appeared lambent tongues like that on the head of young Iulus in Virgil, indicative of purifying power. Their eyes beheld the phenomenon. (c) They all began to speak with other tongues so that the crowds from different parts of the world heard the gospel in their own language. The intent of the Spirit was that they should be Christ's witnesses. The multitudes "wondered," were "amazed," "confounded."

Evidences of the Spirit's presence were also *internal.* (a) A clear insight into the scriptures. The crowds thought the disciples were drunk. Peter quotes at length the prophecy that fits the situation exactly and declares its fulfillment. They were drunk, but theirs was a spiritual intoxication and the wine which they drank was the new wine of the kingdom. Peter preached a brief but convincing sermon, of twenty-two verses. Ten verses were quotations from Joel and David and the other twelve verses were interpretations and applications of those ten. (b) A holy boldness. All the apostles had fled when Jesus was arrested. Peter had denied Him thrice. Now, what a change! Peter and John

are unawed in the presence of the Sanhedrin, unintimidated by its contemptuous threats. Their fearlessness profoundly impressed the rulers, elders, scribes, high priests and others. The record reads: "And beholding the boldness of Peter and John." The group in John Mark's home prayed, "Grant to thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word." They so spake. (c) A burning zeal. A new passion and energy came with the Spirit. Fishing nets lost their charm. Persecution was but a wind which scattered the seed. They went everywhere preaching the word. Gibbon enumerates the inflexible zeal of the early believers as among the causes of the rapid spread of Christianity over the Roman Empire. (d) Marvelous results. Spiritual power is a thing within. It comes from above and dwells in and works through the believer. Under one sermon three thousand were converted. Two chapters later, five thousand *men* were believers. Two chapters still further on we are told, "The disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith." These large results were achieved in the short time of three and one-half years.

The relation of Spirit baptism to water baptism is a controverted question. Jesus did not repudiate water baptism when He said: "John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit, not many days hence." He simply, by comparison, prepared them for the higher realm they were soon to enter. The comparison shows a three-fold difference. (a) John baptized into an element, water. They were to be baptized into a person, the Holy Spirit. First that which is nat-

ural; then that which is spiritual. (b) John's baptism was administered once and the believers came up out of the water. They were to be baptized into a permanent element, or condition, in which they should abide. (c) John's baptism typified a breaking with sin. The baptism of the Spirit typified a union with Christ. Certainly baptism in water was not superseded and abolished as the peace-loving Quakers teach. The converts on Pentecost were baptized just as converts were before Pentecost. "They then that welcomed His word were baptized." The practice of baptism after Pentecost was uniform. "But when they believed Philip publishing the good news concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Saul was baptized after he received the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:18). Cornelius was baptized after the Holy Spirit came on him (Acts 10:44-48). Baptism and the work of the Holy Spirit went along together. The Samaritans were baptized and then endued. Saul and Cornelius were endued and then baptized. There is no authority in the New Testament for abolishing, or for changing, baptism.

The Spirit did not enter the world at Pentecost. He moved upon the face of the waters in the first chapter of Genesis. He strove with wicked men in the sixth chapter of Genesis. David prayed, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." The prophets "searched what time or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify" (I Peter 1:11). Zacharias and Elizabeth prophesied under the Spirit's power. Jesus, before the ascension, breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22).

There is a difference, however, in the Spirit's office and work under the new dispensation. Under the old dispensation a bad man, Saul, had the spirit of prophecy; under the new dispensation, the Spirit is given to none but good men and He keeps them good. He is *in* rather than *on* them. Simon Magus might have obtained the Spirit under the old dispensation, but not under the new. Again, in the Old Testament the Spirit was given only to official persons, judges, kings, prophets (Judges 15:14). In the New Testament, He is for all believers. "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh," old men and young men, males and females, bond and free. Once more, in the Old Testament the Spirit in Judaism was not missionary. In the New Testament He is bestowed for service. He illumines the mind of the Christian; He convicts the heart of the sinner; He thrusts forth laborers in the harvest field; He seals the preached word unto salvation.

Two things are true of every Spirit-guided worker in the Acts. (1) He was directed to the right person. The angel of the Lord told Philip to go to the desert road. He found an inquiring, receptive soul. Paul was providentially prohibited from preaching in Bithynia and sent to Europe. (b) He had the right word to speak. Philip preached unto the Eunuch Jesus and he professed faith. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia and she gave heed to the things spoken by Paul.

(5) A unity of practice. The Christian community accepted and observed two rites. Baptism was administered to those who received the preached word. The great command of Jesus was obeyed implicitly; baptize the disciples. Repentance was a prerequisite: "Repent ye, and be baptized."

Faith was a prerequisite: "Then they that received His word were baptized." Repentance and faith are the human side and regeneration is the divine side. When a sinner repents and believes, he is regenerated by the Spirit of God. When he is regenerated, he is a proper subject for baptism and that is his immediate and imperative duty. Salvation precedes the ordinances. Abraham was justified by faith before he knew aught of the Mosaic ritual and ceremony. John the Baptist challenged the fruits of repentance of some who came to his baptism and refused to baptize them (Matt. 3:7-10). His first note was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He preached repentance first, and baptism on account of the remission of sins. Jesus and His apostles made disciples before they baptized them (John 4:1). The Jerusalem church observed the same order.

Members of that church were consistent in practice in other fields of labor. A deacon became an evangelist. His first converts were baptized after they believed "the good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:4). On the second occasion of his evangelistic effort the enquirer was guided by the preacher into the knowledge of Jesus and baptized after he received that saving knowledge (Acts 8:34-39). The minute description of the ordinance leaves no doubt as to the mode. As to the meaning, it was an expression of the Eunuch's faith and a pledge of his allegiance to Jesus. The mission of the evangelist was to preach Jesus and baptize those who believed in Him. Peter commanded his six companions to baptize the converted, spirit-endued Gentiles in Cæsarea (Acts 10:47f).

Baptismal remission, as expounded by Mr. Alexander Campbell, makes a believer's salvation contingent upon an ordinance along with other things; whereas, the scriptures teach that salvation is all of grace through faith. Two thoughts should fix themselves in our minds about Peter's meaning in Acts 2:38. (1) He would not contradict his Lord. The Master instructed "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations" (Luke 24:47). He did not connect baptism with the remission of sin. He did say that His blood was "shed for many unto the remission of sins" (Matt. 20:28). If it was His blood then it was not the water of baptism. The meaning of Peter was analogous to that of Jesus in Matt. 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned"—not because he is not baptized, but because he does not believe. (2) He would not contradict himself. Three times in Acts, after Pentecost, Peter mentions the remission of sins and in no instance does he associate it with baptism. "Repent, therefore, and turn that your sins may be blotted out" (3:19). "Him did God exalt as a Prince and a Saviour, with his right hand, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins" (5:31). "To him all the prophets testify, that through his name every one who believes on him shall receive remission of sins" (10:43).

The logic of baptismal regeneration applied to the Lord's Supper leads to transubstantiation. The belief in baptismal remission produced two opposite evil results. (a) The postponement of baptism as long as possible, to be sure all sins were washed away. (b) The baptism of infants, lest they die

unbaptized and be lost. The bitterest waters that ever flowed from a religious fountain are the union of church and state, and religious persecution. They both have their source in baptismal regeneration. Mr. Campbell made too much of baptism; certain Pedobaptists make too little of it; the first church practiced it as an act of obedience by the saved.

The Lord's Supper was the other ordinance of this church. They were constantly attending "upon the breaking of bread." A new ordinance was instituted by Jesus the night of His betrayal. The Passover symbolized the theocracy of the past. The Supper symbolized the vital relation of the believer with the invisible King. Jesus paid homage the last time to the past and gave a new symbol to be honored in the future. The Supper was an outward embodiment of the New Covenant, more spiritual than the old and equally as vivid. Its meaning to the saints was profound and precious. They saw in it: (1) An abiding memorial to their Lord; (2) an impressive enforcement of dependence on the merits of His death as a sacrifice for sin; (3) a constant reminder of their need of spiritual participation with Him as the bread of life; (4) the bond of a new brotherhood; (5) the token of His return.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper were the only two outward forms in the new society. They were divinely created in their number and nature. Baptism was administered once for all. The Supper was administered frequently, probably weekly, or daily, in Jerusalem. No human authority can add another ordinance. These two, no more. No human authority can change the ordinances or their simple,

scriptural symbolism; this and nothing else. Baptism is a symbol that we are in Christ; the Lord's Supper is a symbol that Christ is in us.

(6) A unity of possessions. A situation developed in the Jerusalem church which has been the source of widespread controversy and misunderstanding. I refer to the community of property in Acts 2:44f and 4:32-37. On that passage and practice some base the Christian authority for socialism. Such socialists advocate the nationalization of industry and the abolition of private property. They contend that this scripture teaches that the rich and poor should put all their property in a common fund and have equal access to that treasury. They are not troubled by the well recognized fact that if equality of property were established to-day there would be inequality to-morrow, if men were allowed to trade. They stand firmly upon the righteousness and wisdom of a supposed apostolic precedent.

Does this scripture teach socialism? Well, if it does it is voluntary socialism. What they did was not under the requirements of law or in obedience to a divine command. Jesus' instruction to the rich young ruler does not contravene this position. The young man's goods were impeding his development, circumscribing his horizon, dwarfing his spiritual capacity; and Jesus put his finger on the place of weakness and pain in his life. Elsewhere, Jesus gave different instructions to seekers after salvation. Always, He sought to remove the obstacle between the sinner and Christ. In the case of the young ruler the obstacle was his goods. Joseph of Arimathea was not required to sell his property and it was in his newly-hewn and costly tomb that Jesus' body found a decent burial. The owner of

the olive grove east of Jerusalem was not commanded to sell his valuable suburban property. It was there Jesus found a quiet retreat from the noise and conflict of the city, and a trysting place for communion with the Father. A rich friend of Jesus in the Holy City owned a home sufficiently large to entertain thirteen guests on short notice. Jesus' parents were poor. He remained poor. He comforted and cheered the poor. He warned the rich. But He also saved the rich and accepted and enjoyed their friendship.

The Bible is its own best interpreter. Chapter five of the Acts removes all doubt about the meaning of the community of goods and shows it to be purely voluntary. Peter said to Ananias, "While it (the land) remained, did it not remain thine own?" There is positive authority for the right of private property. "And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" He was not under any command to give it all. He wanted credit for great liberality without in fact being very liberal, and God struck him dead, not because he did not give all, but because he acted and told a lie to God. He is more merciful now than He was then. If He should kill all the people in the churches to-day who tell stories about what they are able to give, and what they do give, the slain of the Lord would be many, and some churches might not have enough members left to hold a business meeting.

If further proof be wanted, it ought to be sufficient to say that no other church in the New Testament had a community of goods. Trusteeship was taught by Jesus and Paul, but not socialism. And, furthermore, this one experiment was a failure. Other churches by spontaneous outburst sent succor

to feed the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul carefully organized a host of independent churches in coöperative brotherly action, caused by the breakdown of the community of goods in Jerusalem. This was not a shining example of an ideal social system.

But we must not miss entirely the force of this community of goods. It speaks well for the faith, enthusiasm, and devotion of the members that they were willing to give all to finance the struggling cause. It was expected that Christ's return from heaven was imminent. In the paradisiacal joy of Pentecost "no one said that aught of the things which he had was his own, but they had all things common." The situation was unusual. A gracious revival was in progress. Some lost their means of support by becoming Christians. Thousands remained in Jerusalem longer than they expected. They were without places to sleep and without food. The church made common cause. Every one put all he had at the disposal of the church to meet an emergency. I have seen the same spirit manifested at a district association in Virginia. Thousands were fed by the whole church spreading their baskets in common on the long, hospitable, and sumptuous table. I believe in that form of "socialism."

4. The church triumphed over persecution. Our Saviour had foretold that persecution awaited His followers. He forearmed them by forewarning them. They need never fear. It should be given them what to speak. He would be with them in the hour of trial and all the way. His words as to persecution and preservation came true in short time. First, the Sadducees were enraged by the

doctrine of the resurrection. They were materialists. No angel, no spirit, no resurrection, or general judgment was their negative creed. Peter habitually and persistently preached, as an eye witness, the resurrection of Christ. On Pentecost: "This Jesus God raised up, of which we are witnesses." Acts 2:31. In Solomon's porch: "Whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses." Acts 3:15. "God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." Acts 3:26. Before the Sanhedrin: "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead." Acts 4:10. Throughout Jerusalem: "With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." Acts 4:32. Before the Sanhedrin the second time: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree . . . and we are witnesses of these things." Acts 5:30, 32. Six times in five chapters the resurrection is preached.

That doctrine cut under the Sadducees' position, destroyed their influence, endangered their position, and imperiled their lives. They resolved to fight. Force, not argument, was the weapon which they wielded. Twice the apostles were imprisoned. Once they were released with a threat suspended over them. The second time, Gamaliel's counsel saved their lives, and they escaped with a beating. Threats and imprisonments did not stop the apostles nor destroy the truth. The number of believers became about five thousand men at the very time the apostles were first in prison. Miraculous manifestations were given the church, hypocrites were

killed, the people magnified the apostles, who rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. Jesus told them, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." The cheerfulness and heroism with which they bore themselves promoted their cause and defeated the Sadducees. Convincing preaching, earnest living and mighty doing commended their cause to the people. The more they were persecuted, the more they grew.

Second, the Pharisees were angered by Stephen's wonders and signs. He wounded their dearest prejudices by his preaching and conduct. The issue was not the resurrection. It was the value and permanence of the old dispensation. Stephen proved the superiority of Christ's sacrifice, priesthood, and temple. His deeds confirmed and vindicated his doctrine. Discussion, not force, was the weapon his enemies employed. They disputed with him, "and were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke." Bested in debate, they suborned witnesses and accused him of profanity. His noble defense added fuel to the flames of their wrath. They gnashed their teeth. They stopped their ears that they might not hear the preacher's voice. They rushed upon him as dogs upon a beast. They cast him out of the city and stoned him. The light which shines on angels' faces beamed from his countenance. Heaven opened before his closing eyes. Jesus, represented elsewhere as seated by the throne of God, rose and stood in defense of his martyred disciple. A prayer for the persecutors ascended from his dying lips. The chief of his opponents never got away from the sight of the dying saint.

"Si Stephanus non sic orasset,
Ecclesia Paulum non haberet."

"If Stephen had not so prayed
The church had not had Paul."

Persecution which had been confined to an individual spread into a storm that swept all the church from Jerusalem, except the apostles. They went preaching. Crowds gave heed with one accord. The ablest of the Pharisees was converted. The church won its greatest convert.

Third, the Jewish state essayed to succeed where the Sadducees and Pharisees had failed. Herod Agrippa, the king, put forth his hand to harm some of the church. James, the apostle, he beheaded. Peter, he imprisoned. Prison bars could not hold the man whom God protected. Once before an angel freed him. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." An angel of deliverance released Peter and an angel of judgment smote Herod. Worms ate his corrupt body. The word of God grew and multiplied. No weapon formed against a faithful and fearless church prospered. The Sadducean persecution was brought to a close by the considerate counsel of Gamaliel. The Pharisean persecution failed when its protagonist, Saul, was converted. The Jewish State persecution was interrupted when God struck Herod from the pinnacle of power and popular adulation.

May it not be that there is too much concord between the world and the churches due to the compromising attitude of the churches? Are we not too timid about opposing errors of doctrine and the ways of wickedness? Every pastor in a city church

must choose between being a trimmer and a prophet. If he is a trimmer the wicked will praise him, toast him, crown him. If he is a prophet who preaches a strong, sound, pure gospel the liberals will call him narrow. Yet in this way is found the unfading crown. "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," was spoken by a gentle, peace-loving Saviour. A church and preacher must not be belligerent; they must be courageous and true. The same God who cared for the Jerusalem church still lives and cares for His own.

The struggle of Virginia Baptists for religious freedom is a case in point. They were the last denomination to enter the Colony. Persecution was rampant. They suffered most. Through those trying years they never dipped their colors. Others petitioned for toleration; they petitioned for liberty. Others would accept the "Apportionment Bill"; they uniformly insisted upon complete separation of church and state. Baptists were maltreated elsewhere, but nowhere else did they encounter so many prohibiting laws as in Virginia. The history reads like the early chapters of Acts. Where they were persecuted the most severely for conscience' sake, they grew the fastest. In 1768 there were only four or five Baptist churches in Virginia. In 1788 there were about one hundred. They increased from no preachers to nearly one hundred. They took first place among the Baptists of all the colonies in twenty years. Within thirty-five years they out-numbered all Baptists in the United States outside of North Carolina.

I have not meant to say that the first Christian church was perfect. That attribute belongs alone to the church in glory. The First church was lack-

ing in a comprehensive understanding of the scope of the gospel, but its horizon gradually widened. The oft-heard charge that it was anti-missionary is not substantiated by the records. Half heathen in Samaria and Gentiles in Cæsarea were evangelized by members of this church. Assembled in solemn council, the church disclaimed responsibility for the trouble-making circumcisionists, and refused to lay upon the Gentile Christians any unnecessary burden. Acts 15:25-28. A church which preserved, in a large and cosmopolitan membership, a spirit of brotherhood and unity; a church which made wise selection of its officers and conducted its affairs in an orderly and judicious manner; a church under whose ministry thousands were converted in three years; a church which continually attended to public worship, contribution worship, the Lord's Supper worship, and the prayer meeting worship; a church whose philanthropy has not been surpassed in the history of man; a church whose scattered membership went everywhere preaching the word; a church which won against the lawless opposition of skeptical Sadducees, proud Pharisees and a stubborn state, is worthy of study, of commendation, and of emulation. Such was the mother church at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER III

ANTIOCH—THE MISSIONARY CHURCH

Mythology played around Antioch and Syria more than around the site of any other New Testament church. Six miles to the east was the ill-famed Valley of Daphne. Diana, the goddess of the chase, attended by a bevy of beautiful maidens frequented this valley. One day, the story goes, she was visited here by her brother, Apollo. He saw, loved and sought Diana's fairest nymph, Daphne. The nymph fled and Apollo pursued hotly. In her flight Daphne prayed to her mother, Earth, for protection and was immediately changed into a laurel. Thus, the laurel became sacred to Apollo and the emblem with which victors were crowned. Thus, this valley was named Daphne and became sacred to Apollo and Diana. It became such a center of worship and pleasure that Antioch is sometimes called "Antioch near Daphne." The grossest excesses were practiced by heathen worshipers, vice promoters and Roman soldiers. "Daphnic morals" became a synonym for the worst. The satirist and reformer, Juvenal, charged that Rome was corrupted by the superstitions and indulgences from Daphne: "The waters of the Orontes overflowed into the Tiber."

Typhon, a terrible dragon, who waged bitter war with Zeus, was killed, so the legend runs, by a thunderbolt and buried in the mountain near Antioch. His writhing under the mountain was the mythological reason for the numerous earthquakes.

No city has been so devastated by earthquakes as has Antioch.

Another legend is to the effect that a gifted actress was once performing in the theater of Antioch while the Persians were besieging the city. The enraptured audience applauded a gesture and sentence as the actress outstretched her arm toward the mountain and exclaimed: "Behold the Persians are come." They thought it a part of the play. Persian arrows pierced them through and left them dead in their seats. Disaster befell them, as it did the dwellers in Herculaneum, at a moment when the pleasures of the flesh had banished from their fickle and frivolous minds all thought of death.

Another legend tells how the flight of a flock of birds guided Seleucus from his religious devotions on Mount Casius to the seaport which he founded on the Mediterranean and which became the gate to Antioch from the west. Still another legend relates that while Seleucus was sacrificing in Antigonia, the capital of his conquered rival, an eagle swooped down on the altar, seized a piece of meat and flew away to Mount Silpius at the southern edge of the plain, beside the Orontes. The victor interpreted the omen that the gods thus designated the site of his capital. Accordingly, he destroyed Antigonia and built Antioch on the rising ground between the river Orontes and the high slopes of Mount Silpius.

Passing from legend to history: Seleucus Nicator was the favorite general of Alexander the Great. He commanded the Macedonian Horse. Two decades of strife followed the death of Alexander. The battle of Ipsus, B. C. 301, thwarted the ambitions of Antigonus. After many divisions, there

grew out of the universal empire five monarchies of decidedly Hellenistic character. One of these was Syria, over which Seleucus ruled. Mesopotamia belonged to his domain and Coele-Syria was added to the Kingdom of the Seleucidae by the battle of Paneas, B. C. 198, when Antiochus Epiphanes defeated Scopas, the general of Ptolemy.

The custom in ancient times was for conquerors to commemorate their victories by building cities. Seleucus excelled all others in this respect. He founded thirty-four cities, sixteen of which he named for his father's family, Antioch. The greatest of his cities was Antioch in Syria. For a thousand years it controlled the commerce of the Mesopotamian plain. It was the gateway to the east and the third largest city in the Roman empire. The first great white way was in Antioch. The Antiochians robbed the night of its pall and turned it into a perennial day of pleasure. Who has not walked with Ben Hur about the streets of Antioch, seen Messala gambling with his friends on the island in the river, and sat in the hippodrome where the Jew guided his four fleet Arab steeds through the mazes of the chariot race in the contest with the Roman?

In this capital city of the East, so full of mythological lore, so sunken in moral turpitude, so potential in commerce, so influential in politics, so rich in history, the first missionary church was constituted. The plan of procedure in establishing Christianity was to capture the cities for Christ. As go the cities, morally and religiously, so goes a country. Who saves his city saves all things. The city is the center from which radiate the forces that build up or pull down a civilization. Cities

are the most difficult problems confronting Christianity in America. The gospel attacked the city problem first.

The church at Antioch had its origin as follows: Certain Syrian Jews were in Jerusalem and heard Peter's memorable sermon and were converted. Nicolaus of Antioch was one of the seven set apart to look after the tables. When persecution drove the brethren from Jerusalem some of them from Cyprus and Cyrene went as far as Antioch and preached to the Greeks also the good news of the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them and a great number turned to the Lord.

The Jerusalem church, hearing of the happenings in Antioch, sent Barnabas to inspect this work among the Gentiles. Barnabas was a Hellenist and a man of high rank, distinguished presence, deep sympathy, open mind, broad vision, liberal spirit, and keen perception. He was a good man, not full of prejudice but full of the Holy Spirit and of faith,—faith in God and faith in his neighbors. He goes forth, a committee of one, without instructions. Spurgeon said: "The best committee is a committee of three with two of them sick a-bed." Peter and John had investigated the situation in Samaria and now Barnabas is sent on a somewhat similar mission. It was the longest continuous journey taken thus far in the interest of Christianity, farther from Jerusalem than Joppa, Cæsarea, Samaria, or Galilee. His sole instruction was to go *as far* as Antioch.

Arrived there, he heartily approves the work as being of the Lord. Not an alteration or amendment does he propose. Instead of returning to Jerusalem to report he stays in Antioch and carries on the work of grace begun by the men of Cyprus and Cyrene.

With earnest words he exhorts the brethren to cleave unto the Lord. Multitudes are converted. The meeting grows to such proportions as to require outside help. Barnabas has that remarkable and much-to-be-coveted gift of recognizing merit, of estimating character, of selecting the right man for a given task.

Not far away at Tarsus is a man, forty-four years old, named Saul. Ten years before, he had seen the Lord on the way, had abandoned his course of Pharisee-persecution, had been baptized and had received a commission to preach to the Gentiles. Three years of retirement, meditation, and prayer in Mt. Sinai taught him how to adjust the law and the gospel and fitted him for an unparalleled ministry. His ministry began in Damascus. A conspiracy against his life drove him to Jerusalem. Only one member of the church believed in him. That member was Barnabas who gave him the hand of fellowship and vouched for him before the brethren. The duration of his stay in Jerusalem was two weeks. His preaching stirred up opposition as it did at Damascus; another attempt was made on his life and the brethren sent him away to Tarsus for safety. The Damascus and the Jerusalem experiences were alike in four particulars: (1) Bold preaching. (2) Bitter opposition. (3) Plots to kill. (4) Rescue by friends. Saul remained in obscurity five years but doubtless preached in Cilicia, his native province, endured sufferings (II Cor. 11), and was heartened by revelations (II Cor. 12:4).

Barnabas was profoundly impressed by the striking personality and thrilling religious experience of Saul. Outward appearance counted for little with this discriminating judge of human nature. Saul's physique was not imposing. Small stature,

bent form, affected eyes, bluntness of speech were his characteristics. Oh, but in that bosom beat a great heart; in that head functioned the clearest, most logical brain that ever expounded the teachings of Christ!

Seven years had intervened since Barnabas and Saul met and parted in Jerusalem. In need of a helper to carry on the meeting, Barnabas thought not of Peter, or John, or of any of the more experienced brethren in the mother church; his mind turned instantly and instinctively to Saul. He went for him and brought him to Antioch. Saul had worked, waited, and watched for the open door of opportunity. God was swinging it ajar by Philip's evangelism in Samaria, by the vision of the sheet on the housetop at Joppa, by the admission to the gospel of Gentiles at Cæsarea, and by the conversion of Greeks at Antioch. The door is now flung wide open and the mightiest advocate Christianity has claimed enters. The man and the hour have met. For one year the soul-stirring meeting continued and the church at Antioch is firmly established. The rising sun of Antioch begins to eclipse the waning sun of Jerusalem.

A new name is coined; "The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." Nations, political parties, and religious denominations often call themselves by one name and, by their opponents, are called another name. These names, by outsiders, are generally given as stigmas. Sometimes they aptly describe, and come to be accepted and worn as an honor. So it is with the name "Christian." It occurs three times in the New Testament. A haughty king contemptuously remarks that Paul, with a little persuasion, would make him a Christian

(Acts 26:28). Peter admonishes that if any one suffers as a Christian, as if it had become an indictable offense, let him not be ashamed but glorify God on this behalf (I Peter 4:16). The heathen in Antioch had no category to fit the new society among them. "Jews" did not describe them, nor did "Gentiles." They invented a name, "Christians" (Acts 11:26).

The curiosity-hunting, pleasure-loving, sarcastic Antiochians were compelled to notice this new religion. That church attracted the attention of the world by its deeds, not by its sensational advertisement. Jesus could not be hid. Peter lived his earnest, unostentatious life, crowds attended him and the sick were laid by the roadside in the hope that his shadow might fall on them. Paul became known everywhere he went. Merit will win. Every one, at last, brings in the market of the world about what he is worth and he ought to be too honest to want to bring more. The church and pastor who do things will compel the attention of the world by their very works. Leaven permeates, salt preserves, light shines. Haman observed of all captive Jews, "Their laws are diverse from all people."

Study this new name. It did not stand for a political party like "Herodians." It did not stand for a philosophical school like "Aristotelians." It stood for the followers of Christ who were united by a principle which the worldlings did not understand. The Antiochians had no idea Christ was not a proper name, but the designation of an office. God overruled their mistake for Christ's glory. Had the disciples been called "Jesuits," that would have signified followers of the mere man. Had they been called "Galileans," that would have localized and

provincialized them. Ignorant of the bond which united them, their enemies called them after the anointed Son of God. It was a happy, a providential, blunder to describe that blended church in which Jews and Gentiles first met and mingled as equals.

It is a strange fact that the appellation of their foes is the one by which the followers of Jesus are now commonly designated, both by the world and by themselves. They called themselves "disciples," "believers," "saints," and "brethren," in apostolic times.

There were various elements of strength in the church at Antioch which are worthy of particular consideration and general emulation. To these we now direct our attention, taking them in chronological order.

1. Evangelistic in spirit. Evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel. Logically and chronologically it is the first duty of believers. Jesus set it first in the great command. Growth is essential to well-being. It is earnest, direct, personal, and aims to convey to the lost a saving knowledge of Christ. Jesus made his people responsible for *contact* with the unsaved, not for their conversion. The one is the Christian's work, the other is God's. God does His part when we do our part. Witness the beginning in Antioch. Directly after the gospel was preached there, it is recorded: "And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number that believed turned to the Lord." Power from above attended the faithful preaching of the glad tidings. Barnabas' visit follows and similar results attend his labors, "And a great multitude was added to the Lord." The revival waves rose high and rolled strong. They did not ebb. Saul came to assist.

For a whole year the church was in a continual state of revival. Multitudes were taught. The normal condition was one of spiritual awakening.

Evangelism changed the morals of the city. Licentiousness was rebuked, extravagance was checked, Greek estheticism and oriental luxury were discounted, by the contrast with a soul-saving group who showed the people a more excellent way. The people saw the difference and abandoned the old for the new. Schaff says that at the time of Chrysostom half of the population were Christians.

Evangelism changed the center of Christianity. Ten "church councils" met in Antioch 252-380. The patriarch took precedence over the patriarch of Jerusalem. Libanus, Marcellus, and Chrysostom came from Antioch. Ignatius started on his march to martyrdom in Rome from Antioch.

Evangelism is the very life of a church, in doctrine and deeds. A church that is not evangelistic will not long continue evangelical. When the passion for souls is lost, God writes "Ichabod" over the church portals.

Evangelism is the panacea for the maladies which afflict society. Every troublesome issue, political, economic, and religious, could be settled aright by a world-sweeping revival of the Antioch type. Other remedies deal with suffering. This remedy deals with sin, the source of suffering. Others lop off the diseased limbs of the tree. This one digs around and fertilizes the roots. Therefore, let us have the spirit of personal, pastoral, and perennial evangelism.

"Give us a watchword for the hour
A Thrilling word, a word of power;

A battle cry, a flaming breath,
That calls to conquest or to death;
A word to rouse the churches from their rest,
To heed its Master's high behest.
The call is given, Ye hosts arise;
Our watchword is Evangelize!

The glad evangel now proclaim,
Through all the earth in Jesus' name,
This word is ringing through the skies,
Evangelize! Evangelize!
To dying men, a fallen race,
Make known the gift of gospel grace;
The world that now in darkness lies,
Evangelize! Evangelize!"

2. Liberal in giving. Liberality thrives in an atmosphere of evangelism. The heart that is warm with the grace of God is generous towards every human need. Money flows freely from Christians in a state of revival. The financial problem of any church is fundamentally a spiritual problem. The first act of the Antioch church was to take a collection. Agabus predicted a dire and distressing famine. Barnabas has qualified as an authority in beneficence. He probably led in this offering. The man who gives money can induce others to give, anywhere, everywhere, for any object. The people know. They cannot be camouflaged by the preacher's talk or pretensions to liberality. They measure him by what he is and does. When he leads unselfishly, heroically, they follow. A liberal preacher makes a liberal church.

Antioch was not a rich church. The impending famine threatened them as well as Jerusalem. Nevertheless, they determined to send relief. The

essence of Christianity is a gift. "God gave his only begotten Son." Living is giving. Withholding is death. Small means and dread of poverty are no excuses. God cares for those who seek first His kingdom. The kingdom as represented by the saints in Jerusalem was in need. These Gentile Christians put that kingdom first above their own church, their family, or their individual needs. It is not recorded that Antioch starved or suffered; but it is recorded of them that they were the first body of Christians in the apostolic age to attempt to relieve the distress of the poor and needy outside of their own membership.

The method of raising the funds is instructive. Ramsay says they apportioned to every one according to ability and gathered the funds in weekly offerings. "The disciples, according to the means of the individual, arranged to send contributions for relief." This is different from the community of goods in Jerusalem. Yet, it is the same spirit and purpose. There was diversity but not disproportion in the giving.

This is the solvent for socialism. Men resent the injustice of grasping, selfish capital. Old conditions of self-centered wealth and oppressed labor must go, never to return. What shall take their place? An unreasoning and lawless labor oligarchy? That were little less intolerable than the lordship of capital. A dreamy and unpractical soviet? That were unthinkable. None of these: but the Antioch standard that every man must serve according to his ability, that every man must help where help is needed, and that Christianity is a fraternity, a brotherhood, in which one feels another's woe and lifts the load from another's overburdened back.

Self-centered men of wealth in the churches are foes to the churches and to society. Did they but know it, they make it increasingly difficult for Christian ethics to meet and master the ever growing unrest of the proletariat. It is either Christian philanthropy, liberality, brotherhood; or socialism by law, or lawlessness. The future holds no other alternative that I can see. Men know that God created the original sources of wealth for the race to develop and utilize. They know that a few cannot amass fortunes without the help of society. They know that capital is helpless and valueless without labor. They can be brought to see that there are no necessary conflicts; that their interests are mutually dependent. The spirit of liberality which abode and operated at Antioch will calm the turbulent waves of the social sea.

The material help brought from Antioch was the first report Barnabas made of the work he was sent to inspect. The report seems to have been entirely satisfactory, at least for the time being. Poor people naturally are kindly disposed to their benefactors. The sense of brotherhood was promoted between the mother church of unnumbered members and scant support, and the young, increasing church of growing power and practical philanthropy.

3. Missionary in practice. Missions inevitably flourish in the evangelistic and liberal church. They are three links in a chain. Wherever you find the first two you inevitably find the third. Jesus had given His missionary command three times after his resurrection. It is the Magna Charta of Christianity and the marching orders of Christ's churches. It is perennially fresh and inexhaustibly complete. It contains six "alls"—all power, all ye, all the world,

all nations, all things, all the days. Peter saw the opened door on the housetop. The mother church did not take the command seriously or enter the door fully. It remained for the first Gentile church to be the first foreign mission church.

While they were leading a life of religious duties and fasts the Holy Spirit said: "Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul to the work which I have called them." The movement originated with the Holy Spirit. Anti-missions is resistance to the Spirit of God. There had arrived what Mr. Gladstone called one of those "golden moments, when life runs rhythmic as a balanced wheel, revolving swiftly yet silently on its axis." The brethren at Antioch were daily devoted to three exercises: (1) prayer, the yearning for better things, lofty idealism; (2) ministering, the performing of immediate tasks, the doing of work; (3) fasting, the sacrifice of pleasure, the denying of self. Propitious, indeed, was the hour for the spirit to inaugurate the vast enterprise of world-wide missions.

The church responded to the impulse for the larger campaign. The commission of the Lord became effective through the Spirit. The Spirit's instruction was general. He did not say specifically where the missionaries were to go. "To the work to which I have called them" assigned no definite field. Obedience was particular. It reminds one somewhat of Isaiah's call and consecration. He heard a general call, "Whom shall I send?" He made a personal response, "Here am I, Lord, send me."

Think of the character and qualifications of those first missionaries. In the church at Antioch were five prophets and teachers. Prophets were inspired

men who wrote, or spoke, God's revelations. Teachers were Spirit-guided interpreters of those revelations. Both gifts might be possessed by one man. One of the five, Niger, was probably a Negro. A second, Lucius, may have been an African. A third was the foster brother of the adulterous and murderous king who beheaded John the Baptist. What diverse destinies for Herod and Manean. One was a votary of pleasure, superstitious, cunning and debauched. He beheaded John, tried Jesus and was banished on the Rhone. The other was a member of a Christian church, a prophet of God, a teacher of the heathen, a devout worshiper and a genuine philanthropist. In the same environment grew up Jacob and Esau, the Elder Brother and the Prodigal.

"You may grind them in the self same mill,
You may bind them, heart and brow;
But one will follow the rainbow still,
And the other will follow the plow."

Barnabas and Saul completed the list of five. These two were more widely known, better trained, more experienced. Their success was conspicuous. They were the outstanding men. The ablest were sent as foreign missionaries. The church which emptied its pockets of the money for the poor emptied its pulpit of its strongest preachers for the regions beyond. The work of the church went on. Later, Barnabas settled in Cyprus and Antioch, in that same unselfishness in the gospel, released its most gifted young preacher, Silas, to accompany Paul. I have known a generosity in giving money and a selfishness in withholding men. Antioch was

not lacking in the readiness to send forth her most eloquent preachers. The progress of that missionary endeavor should remain to all time an impressive lesson to churches and mission boards in the selection of missionaries. The heathen need the best. The early history of Virginia Baptists furnishes an example somewhat analogous to the Antioch precedent. David Thomas was the only degree man among the Baptist preachers, though his was an honorary degree. Daniel Marshall was the next best trained preacher. The lesser men pastored the churches while Thomas and Marshall went afield calling sinners to repentance, confirming the saints in the faith, establishing churches. The first two missionary evangelists sent out in 1823 by the Baptist General Association of Virginia were J. B. Jeter and Daniel Witt, two of the most gifted men Virginia Baptists ever had. It was a wise distribution of laborers as the increase of the Virginia Baptists demonstrates.

Centuries have passed since the missionary movement was set going at Antioch. All that is best in the subsequent uneven history of the world is traceable to that movement. All that is highest and noblest in modern civilization is related, directly or indirectly, to that movement. It was a real gospel *movement.* A few years were sufficient for it to cover the then known world. We want, in all our churches, the vision, the impulse, the effort of the church at Antioch. Our obstacles are nothing like so great, our numbers are larger, our resources are vaster, our gospel and orders are the same. The nations wait for the message, and we move so slowly! We must quicken our pace.

"Sudden, before my inward open vision,
Millions of faces crowded up to view,
Sad eyes that said: 'For us is no provision,
Give us your Saviour, too!'

'Give us,' they cry, 'your cup of consolation,
Never to our outreaching hands 'tis passed;
We long for the Desire of every nation,
And, oh, we die so fast!' "

4. Sound in doctrine. The distinguishing feature of Christianity is its spirituality. It is not a religion of form and ceremony but a religion of heart and life. It is not a religion of systems but the religion of a person. This was something new under the sun. The Old Testament had forecast it, notably in Jer. 31:33: "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." The Jews had missed the deeper meaning of their prophets. Even the brethren in Jerusalem did not clearly perceive the nature of their new religion.

Not only is Christianity spiritual, it is the universal religion. Other religions are territorial, national, racial. Christianity claims the world and includes all nations. This was latent, even patent, in the Old Testament. Isaiah abounds in Messianic prophecies whose scope is world-wide and race-inclusive. The Jews missed the meaning of their mission and the character of their Messiah.

Let us not depreciate Judaism. It had a noble history. Surrounded by nations that deified nature in the form of Polytheism, or of Pantheism, Judaism proclaimed the faith in one Almighty and Holy God, the absolutely free Creator and Governor of

the world. Necessarily connected with this faith in a Holy God, was the recognition of a holy law as a rule of life and the consciousness of the opposition between holiness and sin. From the Jews came the prophets and to the Jews were committed the oracles of God. But the Jews killed the spirit with the letter; encumbered and benumbed the law with traditions; failed to see that the Messiah who was to be the glory of Israel was also to be a light to lighten the Gentiles. They were, when Christ came, narrow, bigoted, selfish, self-centered formalists.

The first converts were Jews. The mother church was composed exclusively of Jews. Naturally, the disciples brought much of their old customs and practices with them into the church. It is not easy to cut across the groove of centuries. Caste is hard to break and the Jews were bound by caste. The conservative element in the church at Jerusalem was strong. Upon hearing Peter's report of the conversion of the household of Cornelius they did join with the brethren in joyfully exclaiming, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). They were willing to give the gospel to the heathen. The vision of clean and unclean meats taught Peter another lesson, viz.:— fraternity. The grace of God cleanses from sin and creates brotherhood. The Jerusalem church did not see this far. The discussion after Peter's visit to Cornelius brought the admission that God saves the Gentiles. It did not touch the question of *how* He saves them. That was postponed fifteen years for settlement. The soundness of the faith of the church at Antioch saved the day for a spiritual, universal gospel.

The most radical and stupendous change in the

history of man took place in the Antioch church from the time of its organization. Jews and Greeks, not Grecians, Hellenists—that is, Jews born outside of Palestine—but Greeks, Gentiles, heathen, mingled in social intercourse and merged into one religious group. There is no parallel in history to this wiping out of racial lines in so short a time. Peter later was afraid when his brethren learned he had conformed to this liberalism (Gal. 2:11f). Some men from Judea visited Antioch and endeavored to subvert the Christians by teaching: "Unless ye be circumcized after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Paul and Barnabas joined issue with them. It was a crucial controversy. The principle involved was the most vital in the history of the New Testament churches.

The Gentile church saw the issue, appreciated its gravity and refused to surrender or compromise. Paul was the protagonist of sound doctrine. Barnabas aided, but faltered once (Gal. 2:13). Paul never wavered. Both in Antioch and Jerusalem he contended for the salvation of the Gentiles without circumcision. He had received his gospel from the same source and in the same region that Moses received the law—from God in the Sinaitic Peninsula. He did not repudiate Moses. He enlarged upon him. He won his case before the Jerusalem council and preserved a gospel of grace for all men. How much we owe to Paul's and this church's able contention for the faith, few appreciate. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again," not, "ye must be born alike." The believing Pharisees contended for conformity; Paul insisted upon freedom—nonconformity. They made salvation contingent upon ordinances; Paul hung it all upon grace through faith.

They confined it to the Jews; Paul preached for all men on the gospel terms.

The spiritual blindness of the Jews in New Testament times is one of the saddest tragedies of history. They did not understand their own scriptures. The Messiah was to be a Jew but the Saviour of all. The prophet of widest horizon prophesied: "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light." "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matt. 4:14, 15; Isa. 9:1). The broad spiritual prophecies and all the humility prophecies were misread in the predilection for a temporal ruler to overthrow the Roman government. One of the enigmas of history is how many of the converted Jews misunderstood Jesus' relation to the Gentiles.

The gospels afford ample data to show that Gentiles were included. For instance; Four women are mentioned in Matthew's genealogy and all are Gentiles, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife. Each became a mother in the Messianic line in an irregular and extraordinary way (Matt. 1:3, 5, 6). Gentile Magi recognized and honored Christ while rulers and theocratic guides passed him by in contempt (Matt. 2:11). Gentile Egypt provided refuge against Jewish malevolence (Matt. 2:14, 15). A Roman centurion displayed a faith not found in Israel (Matt. 8:10). The accursed race of the Canaanites evokes the exclamation, "O woman, great is thy faith" (Matt. 15:25). Jesus eulogized the faith of but two people and both were Gentiles. The mixed multitude fed by Him glorified the God of Israel before they were fed (Matt. 15:31). Greeks

came to Jerusalem desiring to see Him (John 12: 20). The word is not *hellenistae,* Grecian Jews who spoke Greek. It is *hellenes,* Greeks, and always means Gentiles. Gentiles from the East came to His cradle and Gentiles from the West came to His cross. It was a token that the Gentiles were to be gathered in. Pilate's Gentile wife warned, "Have thou nothing to do with this just man" (Matt. 24:14). The only recognition of Jesus' innocence at the crucifixion was by the Gentile guards (Matt. 27:54). The believing Jews should have known Jesus better. Paul was the one who had the deepest and truest knowledge of the Saviour. We are indebted to the Antioch church and to him for turning the gospel stream into an ocean whose waters wash all shores.

The Jews of the first century eschewed the Gentiles, but we of the twentieth century eschew the Jews. They were wrong and so are we. Forget not that Christ offered the gospel first to the Jews. He commanded his disciples to begin at Jerusalem. Paul's rule was to preach first to the Jew. Obstinacy, opposition, enmity, and persecution in one place did not cause him to vary his rule in the next place. The Jew was and is in spiritual blindness. Without Christ, he is lost. He is woefully neglected by Christians to-day. His soul is precious and, if saved, must be saved through faith in Jesus, the Messiah of the Old Testament. God holds us responsible, not for the religious obstinacy of the Jew, but for our dereliction of duty in not employing the means at our command to lead him to the Christ. Paul's sublime faith looked forward to the time when Israel should be saved. We may hasten that time.

5. Sane in polity and policy. By polity is meant

the structure of government. By policy is meant the scheme of management. By correlating and examining all the passages in Acts which refer to Antioch we learn how that church was framed and how it functioned.

As to polity: (1) It was autonomous. The relations between Antioch and Jerusalem furnish an interesting and illuminating study in the development of local self-government. Antioch sent for Saul whom Jerusalem distrusted. There was independence that bordered on a breach of comity. Barnabas and Saul were ordained without even consulting the older church. Principal Linsday (Presbyterian) of Glasgow College, in the Cunningham Lectures, describes a Christian church in the first century thus: "We see a little self-governing republic—a tiny island in a sea of surrounding paganism—with an active, eager enthusiastic life of its own." This is exactly what we see at Antioch. (2) It was also congregational. The church sent forth the missionaries. The English (Acts 13:3) is not very clear. So distinguished a Pedo-baptist scholar as Sir William Ramsay says the pronoun "they" refers to the congregation. The church undoubtedly appointed the committee to go to Jerusalem. The record shows, then, that this church was not controlled by Jerusalem and that it governed itself, though inspired prophets and teachers were in its membership. The only recognized authority over the church was the Holy Spirit who spoke for the one head of the church, Christ.

As to policy: (1) Care was exercised in handling the finances. Two men, not one, were entrusted with the funds for Jerusalem. Business methods obtained in raising and distributing the money, or

provisions. This experience at Antioch taught Paul valuable lessons in church finance. The culmination of his organization of churches in the four provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia was the promotion of a general collection. It was arranged that representatives from the churches should convey the offerings to their destination and thus preserve all from suspicion. It is equally as important to be judicious in church expenditures as it is to be zealous in raising funds. The fact is, competent administration facilitates collections. Honest men will not object to proper safeguards; dishonest men's objections should not be considered. Competent men welcome them; incompetent men must have them. (2) Common sense was used in dealing with perplexing problems. A difference of opinion arose with the mother church. What an opportunity for a row! Antioch displayed a commendable discretion by deciding to confer. There must be no break between these two most influential churches. The Judaizers came from Jerusalem. To Jerusalem, the seat of the trouble, Antioch would go. Jesus said: "Go right along, tell him of his faults." Observance of that scripture rule would adjust misunderstanding between genuine Christians and avert denominational discord. A wise committee was selected for the errand. They had that rare quality, tact.

"Tact, tact, for a fact, fact, fact,
There's nothing in the world
Like tact, tact, tact."

Wisdom was shown by consulting the older church. Also in the manner of approach. Paul laid his gospel privately before those of repute lest his errand

should be fruitless and his work a failure (Gal. 2:1f). It has been called a caucus. Not exactly that. Nothing was "framed up" to be "put over" on the brethren. The discreet apostle simply talked matters over with the "pillars" of the church before he presented his case to the congregation. It was Christian diplomacy. It settled the circumcision controversy harmoniously with the gospel; it defined the character of Christianity; it determined the course of the centuries.

It may be true, as certain scholars tell us, that "the apostolic period was wholly exceptional alike in its nature, in its endowments and in its personalities." But, when they proceed to draw the conclusion that the primitive church was not an ecclesiastical model we ask, "Where can you find a better model than the church at Antioch?" What asset to a community would be comparable to a church in which antithetic personalities were one in the gospel, evangelistic fervor burned hot and went far, pecuniary liberality abounded unto the relief of the needy, missionary zeal parted with the most useful members for the sake of the heathen, sound doctrine stood four-square to every false wind, and self-government preserved order and promoted efficiency?

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA—THE UNSTABLE CHURCHES

It is a question of dispute whether the churches of Galatia were in political or ethnographical Galatia. Sir William Ramsay argues from the adjective Galatian (Acts 16:6) for the Roman province, embracing Galatia proper and parts of Pisidia and Lycaonia. This territory was made a Roman province by Augustus in B.C. 25. It extended diagonally across Asia Minor from the shores of the Euxine in the northeast to the province of Pamphylia in the southwest. If Sir William Ramsay is correct in his position, then the churches of Galatia were Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch, and were evangelized during the first mission and revisited in the course of the second and third.

The older theory, maintained by Lightfoot, holds to a smaller tract of country about two hundred miles in length in the central district of Asia Minor. Early in the third century B.C. the Gauls came as invaders from France, occupied this central section and parceled it among three tribes. Cæsar might have said of Galatia, as he did of Gaul: It is divided into three parts. The churches, according to this theory, were Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium, the central cities of the three tribes. Whichever theory of the territory one accepts, and this discussion is based on the older one, it is inescapable that they were the *churches* of Galatia, and not the church

of Galatia. The New Testament knows nothing of a provincial or territorial church.

The only possible reference in the New Testament to a territorial church is in Acts 9:31, and it is controverted whether that text should read "church" or "churches." If "church" be the correct text, then it is reasonable to suppose it means the local church of Jerusalem, whose members had been scattered abroad by the persecution which killed Stephen (Acts 8:3f). We read later of "the churches of God which are in Judea" (I Thess. 2:14); and, "I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea" (Galatians 1:22). Upon what grounds of exegesis can one take a doubtful text which probably refers to the members of a local congregation and seek to support a theory which is antagonistic to the inevitable teaching of other incontestable texts?

The inhabitants of the ancient Kingdom of Galatia were a Celtic race, who lived originally in what is now northern and central France. In physique they resembled the Germans; men of large stature, fair skin, blue eyes, and light hair. In temperament they were the antitheses of the Germans: agile, volatile, restless, impulsive. They were the same people who settled Wales and Ireland and their traits persist in Ireland to-day. Mr. Lloyd George conclusively proved, to an impartial mind, the "uncertain temper" of the Irish by citing Ireland's record in the world war. In 1914 every Irish representative in Parliament approved the war. There were English and Scottish representatives who disapproved, but no such Irish representative. In 1916 they were shooting down in Dublin British soldiers not yet recovered from the wounds of the war. In 1917 and 1918 they were conspiring with Germany. In 1919

they declared Ireland to be an independent republic. Would there were a Paul to write a letter to the Irish. One must bear in mind their temperament if he would understand the nature of the Galatian churches.

Luke makes brief mention of the missionary work in Galatia (Acts 16:6; 18:23), but Paul in his letter furnishes the other necessary data. A physical infirmity caused Paul to preach in the Galatian country. "You know that in those early days it was on account of bodily infirmity that I proclaimed the good news to you." These words were written from Corinth on the third journey, about 58 A. D., and referred to events of his second journey, about 55 A. D. Though divinely chosen and inspired, the Apostle to the Gentiles was not exempt from disease. Neither were his companions. He left Trophimus "at Miletus, sick." Epaphroditus was sick unto death at Rome. Jesus was never sick. He himself took our sicknesses; but, just as He bore our sins without becoming himself a sinner, so He bore our diseases without being diseased. Jesus was exceptional, unique. Christian Science's denial of sickness is unchristian and unscientific. Denying a fact does not change the fact.

Jesus healed the sick by miraculous power. He never denied the reality of sickness. The mind has power over the body. Faith is a mighty force. Some physical ills are imaginary. Yet, disease, sin, and death are terrible and ever-present facts. Christian Science contradicts Jesus and Paul. It contradicts human experience. In practical life it results in absurdity or tragedy. In a crowded auditorium in Chicago a large gentleman arose and, in stentorian tones and defiant manner, inquired, "Are there any

Christian Scientists here?" A small, sallow-faced, meek-eyed, dreamy looking woman, who sat on the second seat from the front, thinking her faith was being challenged, arose and said in a falsetto voice: "I have the honor, sir, of being a Christian Scientist." "Well," said the man, "please exchange seats with me. I am sitting in a draught and don't want to take a cold."

This reminds us of Mark Twain's story of a Christian Scientist in Switzerland. Mark imagined himself climbing the Alps. He fell and rolled to the foot of the mountain. His flesh was lacerated and an arm broken in two places. They bore him to the hotel, where a surgeon set the arm and treated his bruises. A Christian Science healer came and regaled him with her theories. "Mr. Clemens, you are not hurt at all. There is no such thing as pain. I am amazed that so intelligent a man as you should be under such a delusion." "Madam," said Mark, "I am in excruciating agony. My arm is broken in two places. If you were suffering as I am you would have hysteria." Day by day the "Healer" came, but Mark kept his physician. In due time he was ready to leave the hotel. The "Healer" sent him a bill for her professional services. "Whereupon," said Mark, "I paid her with an *imaginary* check."

God who makes all things work together for good to them that love Him used Paul's providential affliction to plant churches in Galatia. The Apostle wished to preach in pro-consular Asia and Bithynia, but the Holy Spirit forbade him and shut him up by illness to Galatia. Ministers cannot choose their fields of labor. The Holy Spirit, who inaugurated the missionary enterprise at Antioch and makes men overseers of the flock, directed Paul in a path which

he did not choose and by means which he could not control.

An inference from Galatians 4:15 is that Paul's thorn in the flesh was an infection of the eyes. "Had it been possible you would have torn out your own eyes and have given them to me." He never fully recovered from the effect of the dazzling light that shone upon him on the Damascus road. Thrice he prayed for the removal of his infirmity, but it remained. Dr. P. S. Henson had a glass-eye. A deluded sister once asked him, "Dr. Henson, why don't you pray God to give you another good eye?" He detected that the sister had false teeth. Quickly he retorted, "My good sister, why don't you pray God to give you another set of teeth? When He does that I may follow your advice." Paul and Henson were supplied with grace to bear their infirmities. Another plausible theory is that Paul's thorn was his temper. (See Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Corinthians II, pages 13-18.) Still another possible theory is that the thorn was malarial fever. (See The Life and Letters of Paul, David Smith, page 655.) Chrysostom thought the thorn referred to persecutions.

One must reject as wholly without support the Roman Catholic interpretation, put forth by the medieval monastics, who supposed the thorn of the flesh was the solicitation of carnal desire. Lightfoot's approval of the theory that, like Julius Cæsar, Mohammed, Cromwell, and Napoleon, Paul was an epileptic is a sample of the acceptance of rash speculation by a distinguished scholar. What the thorn was is problematical. All the valid evidence is contained in two references by the Apostle (Gal. 4:13; II Cor. 12:7). From that evidence eight facts

emerge: (1) It was a physical malady. (2) It was distressing to himself and a trial to others. (3) It affected his sight and evoked the sympathy of the Galatians. (4) It was more than a temporary affliction and clung to him for several years. (5) It was designed for a beneficent use—to keep Paul humble. (6) Its annoying presence incited Paul to take it to the Lord in prayer. (7) Its apparent hindrance was overruled into a source of strength. (8) It furnished an occasion for the display of God's grace and power.

Be it said to the credit of the Galatians, they regarded not the outward man. Paul was received as if he had been an angel of God, or Christ himself. Modern churches are likely to make too much of the minister's appearance. They dote upon ministerial dress and fine physique. An enthusiastic church member remarked, concerning his handsome pastor, that it was worth his salary to see him walk down the street. Paul, of diminutive stature, sore eyes, and ungainly form, could not get a call from some fastidious modern churches. Socrates was known as the ugliest man in Athens: Paul was the homeliest of the apostles. Would that we, like God, looked not on the outward, but on the inward man, and estimated the preacher's worth by what he carries in his head and heart rather than by what he wears on his head and body!

I once heard George Stuart preach a sermon in Louisville on "Opportunity." He emphasized three points: (1) Breaking opportunity; (2) Taking opportunity; (3) Making opportunity. By forceful illustration, he showed how Christians come in one of these three classes. Paul was a master in making opportunities. A prisoner in Rome, he preached the Gospel until it reached with convicting power those

of Cæsar's household (Philippians 1:13; 4:24). Under the same circumstances, he wrote the letter to the Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians, and during the second imprisonment wrote II Timothy. Unable to travel from Galatia, he was, nevertheless, useful and won hundreds to the truth by his fervent appeals. His message sounded the note of finality and carried conviction. "But, if even we or an angel from heaven should bring you a gospel different from that which we have already brought you, let him be accursed." Some things were settled in the thinking of Paul, and we would do well to accept his authoritative gospel and look with neither favor nor patience upon the fads and fancies of new theologians.

Abounding grace saved these Galatians who were formerly slaves to false gods (Gal. 4:8). God thought of them before they thought of Him. Salvation always begins with God. From Him it flows through Christ to man. We are not sons of God by nature, but by faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, these Galatians became sons of God, "and if a son, also an heir through God." . . . "God sent forth His Son that we might receive the adoption of sons." "He called us into the grace of Christ." Grace means free, unmerited favor and goodness, and is opposed to salvation by individual, national, or ceremonial righteousness. In Romans 11:6, he pertinently says: "If it be by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise, grace ceases to be grace any longer." This grace was attested among them by miracles. "He who gives you His Spirit and works miracles among you, does He do so on the ground of your obedience to the law?" (3:5).

The grace of God became available to them through

faith. Long ago Habakkuk (2:4) declared, "The righteous shall live by faith." Paul quotes that prophet to show how the Galatians were saved. Those words came to Luther as, in his blind superstition, he was climbing on his knees the steps in Rome, doing penance for his sins. Acceptance of them cleansed his heart, revolutionized his theology, transformed his life, and made a new map for Europe. The law has its value. Its purpose is to define sin. By the law comes the knowledge of sin. The custom in those early times was for a tutor-slave to lead the child to school where the teacher instructed him. The law was the tutor-slave that led to Christ (3:22). That church which had appropriated grace by faith was one in Christ. Superficial distinctions disappear where grace reigns. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male and female." (3:28.) Grace also prompted obedience to the command of Jesus. With the acceptance of salvation comes the disposition to follow Christ in the ordinance of baptism.

"For all ye who were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (3:27.)

Some devout Christians insist that baptism is the substitute for circumcision. Baptism is both too broad and too narrow for circumcision. The Jews circumcised their servants, which would force us to baptize our servants whether they were Christians or not. The Jews could not circumcise their daughters, which would compel us to deny baptism to our females, if it comes in the place of circumcision. It is passing strange that Paul did not settle the controversy about circumcision among the Galatians by saying, "Baptism has taken its place." He does not hint at such a thought. It is incredible that he should

have failed to mention the connection to them, if there were any.

The Galatian churches began their Christian career with deep enthusiasm and bright promise, but they soon cooled in their ardor and failed to realize their early prospects. They lent a facile ear to the Judaists and incontinently abjured the cause they had so rapturously espoused. Judaizers came among them who indicted Paul on three counts, to-wit: (1) His conduct in circumcising Timothy and refusing to circumcise Titus. (2) His gospel of Justification by Faith apart from works issued in antinomianism. (3) Apostleship was received from others and his claim to equal authority with the original Apostles was an audacious usurpation. The chief attack was delivered on the third point. It was intensely personal. Like such campaigns through all history it was envenomed and unscrupulous. To this bitter charge he replied in that noble defense contained in chapters one and two.

Four times in the New Testament we have accounts of Paul's conversion: (1) By Luke, in Acts the ninth chapter; (2) By Paul from the stairs in Jerusalem, in Acts the twenty-second chapter; (3) By Paul in his speech before Agrippa, in Acts the twenty-sixth chapter; (4) In vindication of his apostleship to the Galatians. The last contains history not otherwise recorded and is illuminating in showing the source of Paul's authority, his relation to the other apostles, and the principles which governed his conduct. His gospel came by direct revelation from Jesus Christ; his apostleship was founded upon the personal appearance of Jesus to him. He declared that he received nothing from the other apostles, withstood Peter in Jerusalem, and at Antioch

rebuked him to his face. Think of a man being so disrespectful to the pope! If the Romanists had been looking for the most authoritative apostle, they would have done better to select Paul as the founder of the papacy. The vacillating conduct of Peter is irreconcilable with infallibility. Thus early James had obtained the preëminence over Peter at Jerusalem, and the order is not Cephas, James, and John, but James, Cephas, and John (Gal. 2:9). James is mentioned before Peter, and all three were "reputed to be pillars." How does this harmonize with Peter being "the rock"? As to Paul's consistency: he circumcised Timothy as a matter of expediency where no principle was involved, but refused to circumcise Titus when it would have meant the sacrifice of a principle.

We marvel that in three short years the foolish Galatians were led astray. "Ye did run well, who hath hindered you?" David Harum says: "There is a good many fast quarter hosses, but dem what can keep it up fur a whole mile is mighty skerse." "Fallen from grace" (5:4) in the context is precisely the opposite of the meaning attached to it by the Methodists. They apply the doctrine to one who professed conversion and has gone back to sin. Paul used the expression to describe those who had abandoned grace as a system of salvation and adopted works; who ceased to rely upon the gracious favor of God and sought to conform their lives to the requirements of the law. The idea was abandoning pardon for sin through grace and seeking salvation through morality as expressed in ceremonialism. "Whosoever of you are justified by law, ye are fallen from grace." This is inevitable if salvation is by works, either in whole or in part. If a man is saved

by what he does he must keep on doing to continue saved. The moment he relents he falls from grace. There are two plans of being saved: the possible way, by grace; the impossible way, by law (Rom. 10:3f). The way by law is impossible because one must keep the whole law. "For whosoever keeps the whole law, and yet sins in one point has become guilty of all." The principle is that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. We know that no one keeps the whole law. "There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

Before one can establish the doctrine commonly called "falling from grace," he must prove two impossible propositions: (1) That the person in question was really saved. Only God and the individual know that. (2) That the person in question was finally lost. Only the disclosures of the judgment will reveal that. Furthermore, if our Methodist friends could prove these two propositions they would encounter the insuperable obstacle that one who has "fallen away" once could never be renewed to repentance (Heb. 6:4-6). They would prove too much, for they would land the "fallen" where mercy could never reach him. Conversion is once and for all time. The writer to the Hebrews makes a hypothetical argument and concludes that one who fell away could never be saved. He does not say that any can or will fall away. On the contrary, he adds, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation."

The Christian is preserved by a double keeping. His inheritance is kept for him in heaven, "An in-

heritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you." He on earth is preserved for that inheritance, "Who, by the power of God, are kept through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last day" (I Peter 1:4f). Until that unfading inheritance in heaven is despoiled and the omnipotent power of God on earth is broken the saint will not fail of ultimate salvation. He is bound to grace by a chain of five links, and unless the devil severs one of those links, the believer will persevere. Those links are foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification (Rom. 8:29f). Change the figure to conversion as a seed. It is imperishable and will never die. "Being born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the Word of God which lives and abides" (I Peter 1:23). Change the figure again to union with Christ. It is indissoluble. "If we are faithless, He abides faithful, He cannot deny himself" (II Tim. 2:13). All the scriptures which seem to teach "falling from grace" are really God's means of preventing that very thing. As to examples like Judas and Simon Magus: they were never converted.

The purpose of God begins in His foreknowledge and is consummated in the glorification of the believer. It is a glorious doctrine which should inspire confidence in the love of God, awaken gratitude in the heart of the sinner, and issue in a dedicated life. The believer is heartened to know that neither tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, life, angels, principalities, things present, things to come, powers, height, depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Apostle expressed no thankfulness for these fickle Galatians. To the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Colosse, and Corinth, he sent messages of thankfulness. Even the corruptions in Corinth did not drown his note of joy; but there their error is one of doctrine and was fundamental. The brethren who are debating the question of what is fundamental and what is not, might profit by a careful study of Paul and the Galatians. The Apostle knew there were some differences that could not be treated lightly. There is a point of divergence beyond which people can not walk together. Paul contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. He voices no gratitude to the Galatians. They are reminded that the motives of their perverters were dishonorable. "These men pay court to you, but not with honorable motives" (4:17). They professed the same teachings and were animated by the same spirit as the false teachers on the Island of Crete. "Men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:11).

This is one of the severest indictments against the false teachers of modern times. Mrs. Eddy accumulated an enormous fortune on the vagaries of Christian Science; Spiritualism requires a medium which not only furnishes opportunity for fraud, but is a fruitful source of financial gain; Russellism was exploited upon a credulous public to the commercial advantage of its patron saint; Romanism fills its coffers by money from its devotees paid for blessing their homes and forgiving their sins and reaches beyond the grave, professing to obtain indulgences for the dead. How unlike Jesus who had not where to lay His head, and Paul who owned no foot of land, are these founders of false religions! Had they

preached and lived unselfishly and died for their doctrine, they might have expected more favor from thinking people. Two men were discussing starting a new religion. One said to the other: "I will tell you how to succeed. Launch your religion. Live it. Sacrifice for it. Die for it. Rise from the dead. Then you will have succeeded."

The peril in the doctrine of grace is that men will presume to sin because saved freely and finally. To safe-guard the doctrine and avoid the error, the New Testament invariably follows the doctrine of grace with exhortations to practical living. Witness how closely the twelfth chapter of Romans follows the doctrinal discussion. Witness the close connection in Titus 2:11: "For the saving grace of God appeared to all men instructing us (that is the intention of the grace) that denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world." Witness the exhortation to service and the instructions about giving which immediately follow the marvelous discussion in First Corinthians of the resurrection. So, having expounded the glorious doctrine of grace, the Apostle of Faith closes with three earnest exhortations to work.

"Let each one prove his own work." (6:4.)

"Let us not be weary in well doing." (6:9.)

"Let us work that which is good toward all men, especially toward them that are of the household of faith." (6:10.)

There is no conflict between James and Paul. Both teach salvation by grace through faith, and both insist upon works as the proof of that faith.

From the churches in Galatia we may learn, among others, four lessons.

1. The fickleness of human nature. Witness its extreme form in baseball lovers who idolize the team when it wins to-day and execrate it when it loses to-morrow. Witness the rise and ebb of the tide of popular applause for public leaders. Mr. Roosevelt understood this trait. Returning from Africa, Egypt, and Europe with rare specimens for the Smithsonian Institute and crowned with the highest academic honors of Great Britain and the continent, he was welcomed by a million shouting, cheering, waving enthusiasts in New York City. That same day he said to his sister, "And they soon will be throwing rotten apples at me." Cæsar and Tacitus noticed and commented on the impulsiveness and changeableness of the Gallic tribes. The Galatians embraced Christianity eagerly, welcomed Paul enthusiastically on his first visit, became jealous partisans, were exceedingly susceptible to personal influence, ran readily after new teachers, adopted another doctrine on the score of its novelty, not its truth, and all this in three short years.

It is to be feared that this Gallic temperament persists and thrives too much in modern churches. Converts from the evangelistic meetings enter the churches in large numbers. Attendance upon the regular services is perceptibly increased. A few months suffice to show a waning of enthusiasm, a lagging of energy, a drifting back to the world.

Watch the new pastor enter a new field of labor. The members vie with each other to do him honor. He is dined and fêted. His praises are sung by his people over the community. Time cools the ardor of some. There are other preachers they like better. He is a misfit. He should never have been called anyway. At first they loved him so they almost

"ate him." Later, they wished they had eaten him.

2. The impossibility of permanent success on some fields of labor. Paul was the best educated man of his day. A precocious boy, a diligent student, he surpassed all his fellows in school. His teacher was the most renowned of that time. His scholarship was profound and broad. He mastered thoroughly what he studied. He studied many subjects, languages, philosophy, literature, and religion. His experience of grace was rich and rare. His training and practical experience fitted him, as well as man can be fitted, for the Lord's work. He gave diligent attention to the Galatians. After his first visit on the second missionary journey (Acts 16:6) he made them a second visit on his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23). Timothy and Silas labored with him in Galatia. Surely it was not because of a lack of ability or diligence in the preachers that this work failed. The thought of having bestowed labor in vain has always been one of the trials of a faithful messenger of God. It was the case with Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, and Paul.

I am not trying to justify those failures where the preacher is at fault. It is admitted that this is often the case. Pastors who express a horror of being "door-bell ringers" should have a care lest they neglect the flock. However, the history of the Galatian churches proves conclusively that the best of preachers sometimes fail and through no fault of their own. There is an admonition here for the churches and a comfort for the preachers.

3. The persistency and insidiousness of false teachers. Those who were undermining the foundations laid by Paul in Galatia were not skeptics, but

religious teachers. They professed to be in fuller accord with the scriptures. They claimed to be the true people of God. The Adventists of our time are their successors—people who destroy churches, disrupt families, and distract minds by a deadly literalism.

Spiritism now plagues some churches as Judaism did in the first century. Though Spiritism is of the highest antiquity, it has undergone a recrudescence amid the sorrows of the World War. Grave philosophical, mental, moral, and practical dangers lurk in Spiritism. Under the Law of Moses, the Israelites were forbidden to try to gather information from the dead through a wizard, if a man, or a witch, if a woman. "Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards; seek them not out, to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:31). The prophets are equally explicit in their inhibitions upon witchcraft. "And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living, should they seek unto the dead?" (Isa. 8:19). "I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers" (Mal. 3:5).

The reason for the Old Testament inhibition of divination is that it is discreditable to man and abhorrent to God. What is proper to know God will make known. The hidden things belong to Him. To pry into them is presumptuous and disloyal. Under the Mosaic Law Spiritism was punishable by death.

Evocation of the dead, then, was forbidden under the Old Dispensation as wicked and unnecessary. It was wicked because it marked a turning away from God to the superstitious practices of the pagan na-

tions. It was unnecessary, for God revealed to His people what it was permissible for them to know. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). Man's duty is to leave the secrets with God and apply himself assiduously in studying and diligently in obeying the things revealed. Once a man in Hell prayed that a spirit might be sent to his father's house to warn his five living brothers of their impending doom. The petition was refused, for, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead."

It may be replied: "Yes, but Spiritism is true, for did not Saul converse with Samuel through the Witch of Endor!" On that supposed interview I make the following comments: (1) What Saul attempted was contradictory to his previously commendable action in suppressing witchcraft; (2) It was at a time when the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him and was done with serious misgivings; (3) The prophecy, supposed to come from Samuel, was not true, for it said Saul would die on the morrow and he did not die until three days later; (4) The semblance of Samuel complained that he was "disquieted" and that is contrary to Job 3:17. When the righteous dies he goes where "The wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." Upon this one questionable incident no sane theory of Spiritism can be founded.

The defender of necromancy rejoins, "Did not Moses and Elijah return from the realm of the dead?" They did, but remember they spoke no message for living people, not even to the three Apostles

who were present with Jesus in the Mount. Of the six people raised from the dead in the Bible, not one word is recorded of their experiences in Sheol. Tennyson is true to the record when he says:

"When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?'
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist."

Jesus is the only traveler who ever returned from that silent bourne with messages to the living. It was necessary that He should return to establish His claims and confirm His promises. Because he came back makes it unnecessary that any one else should. We do not need to visit mysterious mediums in sequestered places to learn if our dear, departed live. The voice of our Lord is sufficient: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on me, although he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." "In my

Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you." "This is eternal life to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The final authority for a Christian is Christ. He has not left us desolate, orphans. He has come to us and demonstrated His identity by many infallible proofs. To seek assurance of immortality in the dubious and often puerile messages of, or through, séances is like forsaking the fountain of living waters for dry and cracked cisterns which will hold no water.

In the hope of Christ's Gospel of immortality dying saints have fallen to sleep in the confidence of awakening on the morning in a fairer and better world; sorrowing loved ones have watched the stars shine through the cypress tress and waited for the Master's summons when they shall join those whom they "have loved long since and lost awhile."

4. The occasional necessity for uncompromisingly contending for the truth. Denominational debates are not to be encouraged. They arouse partisanship and engender strife. Yet there may come a time to a community when loyalty to the truth demands debate with a teacher of false doctrine. The spirit of commendation is to be cultivated, rather than the spirit of blame. Yet, there are occasions when loyalty to the truth demands condemnation of error. The heart of the Christian prompts praise of the true and good. Allegiance to Christ prompts condemnation of the false and bad. Self-interest puts on the soft pedal or proclaims aloud the right to free-

dom of thought and speech, or avows the issue is not vital, or professes neutrality. Self-sacrifice takes its position bravely for the right, irrespective of the odds. Every tenet of our precious faith holds because loyal souls fought and sacrificed for them when they were unpopular and imperiled.

"Then to side with truth is noble, when we share its wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified."

Paul was severe on the Galatians, but not unnecessarily so. Many were drifting without compunction from the truth on which their souls had anchored under his pilotage. The faith itself was in danger of being corrupted fatally. Men crept into the churches who were perverting the disciples by erroneous doctrines. They were more dangerous because they were inside the churches. The truth of the gospel was at stake. It was no time to cry "peace, peace." "The wisdom which cometh down from above is first *pure,* then peaceable." There is a peace whose sleep is death. There is a contention whose issue is life. Paul risked the enmity of the Galatians by telling them the truth. A surer test of orthodoxy and a severer rebuke of heresy was never heard than these words: "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you other than that which we preached to you, let him be accursed."

There are some things worth standing for, worth

living for, worth contending for, worth dying for. The "gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:7) is first among those things. Eternal issues impinge upon it. When the gospel is lost all is lost which gives a church a right to exist. Seven crusades were launched, several hundred thousand lives were lost and two centuries were drenched in blood in an ill-advised effort to rescue the sepulcher of the Lord from the infidel Turk. The goal was not worth the long quest and bloody cost. Those Christian warriors were religiously consecrated "knights" and the days in which they flourished are known in history as the halcyon days of chivalry.

A living faith is worth more than an empty tomb. Perverters of the most holy faith are more dangerous to society and to true religion than the desecrators of an empty tomb. Contenders for the faith are the real knights, knight-errants of the cross. The chivalry that champions the gospel as it is in Christ is of a higher type and finer fiber than that which blossomed and withered in Western Europe in the Middle Ages.

"Who would not brave champions be
In this the lordliest chivalry?
For there are hearts that ache to see
The day-dawn of our chivalry.

"Fight, brothers, fight with tongue and pen.
We'll win the golden day again,
And love's millennial morn shall rise
O'er waiting hearts and longing eyes."

CHAPTER V

EPHESUS—THE EFFECTIVE CHURCH

The city of Ephesus was the capital of a province known as Proconsular Asia. Through the Sacred Port it had immediate access to the sea, with a better port at Miletus, thirty miles distant. Two architectural features adorned the city, the Temple of Diana and the Theatre. The Temple was of shining marble, 342 feet high by 164 feet wide; supported by one hundred and twenty pillars, each 56 feet high, and contained a rare collection of masterpieces of sculpture and painting. At the center of the Temple, concealed by curtains, stood the ancient wooden image of the ugly Goddess Diana, reputed to have fallen from the sky. A treasury, behind the shrine, was the safety vault of Asia, where kings and nations stored their most valued treasures. This Temple was 220 years in building. It burned the night Alexander the Great was born and was rebuilt on the same magnificent plan. It is among the "seven wonders of the world." The Temple of the Sun at Baelbeck is really more wonderful. Its stones are larger, its columns taller and were presumably transported in some inexplicable way from Assuam in Egypt. Indeed, I think that building more wonderful than any of the "seven wonders."

The Theatre at Ephesus was carved in the western side of Mount Oreosus and, like all ancient theatres, was open to the sky. Its capacity was the largest in the Hellenic world. It could accommodate 50,000 people—more than the largest auditorum or base-

ball park in the United States. Near the Theatre, on the north side of the city, was the Stadium where races were run and fights between beasts, and between men and beasts were exhibited. In this Theatre the popular Assembly met for the transaction of business. It was into this arena that the wild mob rushed with the Macedonians, Gaius and Aristarchus, and where Paul himself sought to enter to defend them and himself.

The church at Ephesus occupies a prominent place in the Revelation by John, the Epistles by Paul, and the Acts by Luke. In the Revelation it is the first of the seven churches to be addressed by the Spirit and is commended for its deeds, toil, patience, discipline, discernment, suffering, and hatred of Antinomianism; and is condemned for the loss of its first love, the love of espousal. In a generation its orthodoxy was unimpaired but its ardor for Christ had cooled, its evangelistic fires were quenched. In the Epistles it is the church to which is addressed the letter which discusses more Christian doctrines and duties than are treated in any other section of the New Testament. In the Acts the church is represented completely organized, fully equipped and functioning for Christ.

Devout Jews from Ephesus were present at Pentecost. They may have carried back with them the seeds of Christianity. Paul wanted to preach there in the early stages of his second journey but was divinely forbidden (Acts 16:6). At the close of that journey, on the trip from Corinth to Jerusalem, he made a short visit to Ephesus. He reasoned with the Jews in their synagogue and evidently made a favorable impression, for he was urged to remain and, on leaving, promised to return (Acts 18:19-21).

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That noble man and his wife, Aquila and Priscilla, his companions from Corinth, were left at Ephesus. They set up housekeeping and lived for Jesus. That learned and mighty expounder of the messianic scriptures, Apollos, from the University of Alexander, visited Ephesus and taught accurately his incomplete knowledge about Jesus and thence crossed over to Corinth.

On the third missionary tour, Paul, after passing through the inland districts, paid his promised visit to Ephesus. He did not expect to tarry, but events took an unexpected course and he remained longer than at any other place during his ministry. While here he wrote First Corinthians, in the year 57. The explanation of why he tarried at Ephesus is found in that letter. "For a great and effectual door is open to me, and there are many adversaries" (I Cor. 16:9). Opportunity and opposition! They determined the duration of his stay. They usually coexist. The larger the opportunity the more perplexing the problems. Some preachers run away from them. Paul stayed with them. Adversaries! Ours seem small and insignificant when we read of the ten special adversaries that fought to close Paul's door of opportunity at Ephesus.*

Since the letter to the Ephesians was circular, that is, it was also addressed to other churches, we may confine ourselves to the nineteenth chapter of Acts for the elements of strength in this church in action.

1. The doctrine of repentance was preached and practiced. Twelve men, recent converts, had received John's message of repentance. Repentance was a theme of preaching with Old Testament proph-

* See an interpretation of the English Bible, Carroll on Acts.

ets and New Testament Apostles. Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, preached it in his day. Noah preached it to the wicked antediluvians who died impenitent and whose spirits, when Peter wrote, were reserved in prison. Jonah preached it to the Ninevites: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed," and the greatest revival in history followed. Jeremiah and Hosea preached it from the same text, "Break up your fallow ground." Isaiah and Malachi enforced it from the same figure of speech—the grading of a highway for the king. When the voice of John the Baptist broke the silence of four hundred years, the first note was: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus took up this note of repentance in His ministry and began by saying: "Repent and believe the gospel." The twelve were sent forth and the first thing they did was to preach "that men should repent." Paul, in the most cultured city in the world, announced the universality of repentance: "God now charges men that all of them everywhere should repent." Before the Spirit closed the Revelation He preached repentance through John: "Repent, therefore; or else I am coming to thee quickly and will make war with thee with the sword of my mouth."

Repentance is a change of mind towards God concerning sin. It is superinduced by the preached gospel which, applied by the Holy Spirit, produces a godly sorrow resulting in a change of mind. It philosophically and scripturally precedes saving faith. Bishop Wilberforce aptly says that to repent "is to take the first turn to the right." Genuine repentance, however, is always accompanied by such a saving faith. Wherever the two are mentioned together the order is repentance and faith. See Mark

1:15; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 19:4; Acts 20:21; Heb. 6:1, 2; II Tim. 2:25.

Repentance is the sharp needle piercing the hole through which the silken thread of the gospel may be sewed. It is the hammer which breaks the heart of stone, by grace transmuted into a heart of flesh. It is the plow opening the furrow where the seed of the gospel are cast which sprout and spring up and bring forth an abundant harvest. It is the elemental and fundamental work in salvation. A gospel church is one which proclaims the nature and insists on the necessity of repentance for every one. It has no substitute in culture, education, or good morals. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," is the warning which every church must sound forth. The results of evangelism are more permanent where the Bible doctrine of repentance is preached in its proper place with scriptural meaning. Whatever a so-called church may or may not have, it is not a New Testament church unless its members, like the Ephesians, have heard and heeded the John-the-Baptist cry of repentance.

2. Faith in Christ was professed in the public and appointed way. The twelve men at Ephesus had been baptized "unto John's baptism" which, undoubtedly, was immersion. They were not the converts of John the Baptist, for Jesus accepted John's baptism and his first followers were the disciples of John. They were not the converts of Apollos, for he would certainly have corrected their views about Jesus after Aquila and Priscilla had expounded to him the way of God more perfectly. They were, in all probability, converts made under the preaching of some converts made through the preaching of the disciples of John the Baptist. They evidently

knew nothing about Pentecost and the subsequent events. Paul amplified their views and they were so anxious to be right in their baptism that they submitted to the rite a second time. In what contrast do they stand with those who refuse to obey the explicit command of our Lord! This is the last baptism mentioned in the book of Acts and is so clear and impressive that it ought to suffice for all time.

Baptism is the outward form by which a convert symbolizes his spiritual experience of putting on Christ. It is the uniform to be worn by all who have sworn allegiance to the Christ and who desire to follow the banner of the Lord. The uniform does not make one a soldier; nor does one wear it in order to become a soldier, but because he has already taken the oath of allegiance and become a soldier and in order that both friends and foes of his nation may know that he is a soldier. At the Jamestown exposition the different nations of the world were represented on the drill ground by their soldiers. Every soldier wore the uniform of his country. I saw them drilling, and an impressive sight it was. How incongruous and how shameful it would have seemed for some man, claiming to belong to the army of the United States, to have insisted on drilling with our troops in civilian clothes or with a uniform made according to his own choosing. No more incongruous, however, than those who call Jesus Master and Lord, but obey not His command to put on the one uniform of baptism which He has commanded.

Baptism professes a change which has already taken place and pledges allegiance to the Master. It does not procure that change, but simply indicates that it has already taken place. Years ago a new-

comer from the East, settling in Texas, called on a nearby neighbor, who was an old settler. A peculiar dipper was seen in the bucket of water which attracted the new-comer. He asked where it came from and expressed a desire to secure one for himself. The old settler told him that it was a gourd and grew in abundance over the rear garden fence. He gave the visitor one of beautiful shape with the following instructions: "Cut the gourd, take out the seed and soak in water for several days and then you will have a dipper as good as mine." The newcomer took the gourd, tied a rock around it and sank it in the little stream that flowed hard by his house. Days afterwards he removed it from the water and instead of having a useful dipper he had a decomposed gourd. He called again on his neighbor and said: "How about this? The gourd you gave me was not good. When I took it out of the water it was decaying and offensive and I had to throw it away." The old settler inquired what process he had followed in making the dipper, and, when told, replied: "Oh, you did not follow my instructions. I said first cut the gourd and take out the seed and then soak it in water. Unless you do this the water will do no good, but rather harm." So say we. Unless the heart has been cut by contrition and cleansed by repentance and faith, baptism will do no good, but rather harm.

3. This church was endued with the Holy Spirit. After their second baptism Paul laid his hands upon these disciples who had known only John's baptism and the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. This is the last laying on of hands and the last enduement of the Holy Spirit in the Acts. The laying on of hands was simply a

form of accrediting, a witnessing and approving by the church of the work of grace already wrought by the Holy Spirit. It was practiced when Peter and John went down to Samaria, when Ananias put his hands on Saul in Damascus, when the presbytery ordained young Timothy, and when the church at Antioch sent forth the two first foreign missionaries. With the exception of the incidents in Samaria and Damascus and here, the laying on of hands did not accompany or precede the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Several years ago an Episcopal bishop, in conference with representatives of other denominations, including Baptists, was explaining his views of Christian union. He insisted on Episcopal ordination. A Baptist replied that "any man called of God to preach, and accredited by a church, had a right to preach." The bishop replied that he could not conceive of one being qualified unless he had had the hands of the bishop laid upon his head. The Baptist said the bishop's hands can confer no power. The bishop replied: "If the Holy Spirit is not conferred through the hands of the bishop, pray tell me how He is conferred." The Baptist replied: "He is conferred directly by the Lord himself, as in the case of Cornelius and his household where there is no mention of the laying on of hands."

There are six spirit baptisms in the Acts of the Apostles and every one is significant. (1) In the second chapter of Acts the Spirit came upon the one hundred and twenty at Pentecost,—showing that God will give His spirit to earnest praying Jews. (2) In the fourth chapter of the Acts the company of disciples was praying and the place was shaken where they were gathered together and they were filled with the Holy Spirit,—a miniature reproduc-

tion of Pentecost. (3) In the eighth chapter of Acts, Peter and John visited Samaria and prayed for the new converts under Philip and laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit,—showing that God will give His spirit to the converted half heathen. (4) In the ninth chapter of Acts the convicted, humbled and obedient Saul received the Holy Spirit,—showing that God will give His spirit to a convert who has resisted the Holy Spirit and persecuted the church. (5) In the tenth chapter of Acts the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word in Cornelius' house,—showing that God will give His spirit to the believing Gentiles. (6) In the nineteenth chapter of Acts the Holy Spirit came on the twelve men at Ephesus,—showing that God will give His spirit to those who have held a half truth and come into the possession of the whole truth.

It should be recalled here, however, that following these incidents no one ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. Henceforth we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, endued by the Spirit, guided by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit, etc. The baptism of the Spirit was the initiatory rite of the Holy Spirit in taking up His office work; henceforth we are to recognize Him as the Vice-Gerent of Christ and the Director-General of all the life work of the Kingdom of God.

Power for the churches now-a-days must come from Him. God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. If a Christian limps and stumbles it is for lack of this power. If a church is joyless and barren it is for want of this power. A traveler in California looked out the train

window and saw a carpet of verdure covering the pastures, beautiful flowers blooming in profusion, and rich plumaged birds flitting and singing amid the leafy branches of the healthful trees. He looked out the window on the opposite side of the train and the earth was dry and barren. No life, no music, no joy. He inquired and was told that one side was irrigated and the other was not. So with individuals and churches. Some are prosperous and happy; their leaf does not wither, and joy never ceases, and they bring forth fruit even in old age. They are endued by the Spirit of God. Others are unhappy and fruitless; no soulful music, no joyful thanksgiving, no ripe fruits for the Master. They are not endued with the Holy Spirit's power.

The Holy Spirit's office and work have been so interpreted and preached as to mystify many and repel some. It seems to me to be quite clear if we interpret it with common sense. Two illustrations will suffice. A worldly woman who had never given any serious thought to God was touring the world. In a heathen temple in China there suddenly came over her what she called "a sense of home-sickness" and a loss of interest in all the gorgeous beauty of the temple. She could find no rest or enjoyment until she found it in the far away church in America where her sainted mother and father had worshiped and had tried to lead her in the ways of the Lord. The Holy Spirit convicted her of sin while she was on pleasure bent in the heathen temple.

Ten years ago Dr. Landrum came back to Richmond to hold a meeting with his old church. After the sermon, the preacher gave the invitation and two people raised their hands for prayer but no one went forward to accept Christ. One of the two was

a young man who sat across the aisle from me to the left. I saw him lift his hand. When the benediction was pronounced something said to me, "Speak to that young man." Something else said, "No, you do not know him. He might resent it. It may not be the custom here for Christians to speak to the unsaved." The impression was deep and inescapable, "Speak to that young man." By this time we had met in the aisle. Laying my hand on his shoulder, I said: "Young man, do you not wish to be a Christian?" He knew me and, calling my name, replied, with deep interest: "Yes, sir, that is why I lifted my hand." A few words led to a public confession. The impression on my heart was begotten by the Spirit of God. He so guides His people to-day. We should not expect lambent flames and rushing winds and shaking houses and the gift to speak in many tongues, but we should expect those impressions in the heart which, though less spectacular, are no less divine.

The personality of the Holy Spirit has been denied by that school of philosophy which over-emphasizes the oneness of God. Whatever the metaphysical difficulties, no one can successfully refute the statement that the New Testament conceives of God in three persons. The Trinity was present at the baptism. By the terms of the commission, baptism was to be administered in the name of the Trinity. One verse in Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples contains reference to the three persons of the God-head: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). Peter illustrates the work of the Trinity in the salvation of men (I Peter 1:2).

Analogies of this doctrine are found in nature. Napoleon saw water, snow and ice all in one and argued that three persons could be one in the spiritual realm. Take another illustration: "A single white ray of light, falling on a certain object, appears red; on another, blue; on another, yellow. That is, the red alone in one case is thrown out, the blue or yellow in another. So the different parts of one ray by turns become visible; each is a complete ray, yet the original white ray is but one. So we believe that in that unity of essence there are those living powers which we call persons distinct from each other." We know the Father when we know His Son; we honor the Father when we honor His Spirit.

4. This church had the right kind of preaching. Paul was the preacher and he spoke in the synagogue boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the Kingdom of God. Notice four things in the preaching:

(1) Its boldness. Paul was a brave man morally and physically. Moral courage is of a higher type than physical courage and in this he excelled. He was diplomatic, becoming all things to all men that by all means he might save some, but he did not mince words when frankness was necessary. He never trimmed his sails to catch a popular breeze. He never lowered his flag when the battle for the truth was raging. He knew no man after the flesh and played no favorites. He afterwards said to the Ephesians: "I shrank not from announcing to you anything that was profitable." And again: "I declared unto you the whole counsel of God."

A young preacher in his first pastorate learned that a social club was being run wide open on Sun-

days and games of chance were going on at the very time service was being held in the house of God. He was careful, to be sure of his facts, and on Sunday night he delivered his message and cleared his soul in a protest against such practices. Monday morning he was met on the street by the president of a bank and the following conversation ensued: "You made a serious mistake last night. You preached against the ——— Club and I am a member of that club. You wounded me and I am the best friend you have in this town." The preacher said, "If I stated anything that was not true I should like to know it and correct it. I did not know that you were a member of the club, but if I had known it would have made no difference. In the pulpit I can know no man after the flesh and must preach the truth though it condemn my dearest friends and my nearest kin." "Ah," said the banker, "is that so? I had never thought of it in that light." He was learning an important lesson about the responsibility of his pastor.

(2) Its faithfulness. Three months Paul preached in the synagogue and two years and three months he remained in this great city. He had wanted to go there once and the Lord said "No." Now he wanted to go away and the Lord said "No." Both times he obeyed God. God knows where He wants His preachers to labor and His preachers do not know, except as they learn from Him. When Dr. Moses Hoge had been two years at the Second Presbyterian Church of Richmond he wrote Dr. Plummer in Baltimore that he felt his work was ended in Richmond and would like a change. God thought differently and knew better. Dr. Hoge

remained in Richmond fifty-three years after he wanted to leave and did a memorable work.

Paul was faithfulness itself in Ephesus. He was a diligent pastor, teaching "publicly and from house to house." A plurality of elders, appointed overseers by the Holy Spirit, were his able assistants. He knew his duty and did it well. They loved him, for they believed in him. There is nothing more touching than the parting of Paul with the elders of Ephesus at Miletus. A preacher's pulpit is his throne. He must rule there; but if he would follow the example of Paul and achieve like results he must also go "from house to house." Dr. Cuyler said: "A house-going pastor makes a church-going people." Diligent and tactful pastoral work will produce results on any field.

Preachers should beware lest they become so absorbed in study, sermon preparation, social life, golf, or what not, that they neglect their people in the homes. The only way really to know a family is in the sacred precincts of the family circle. The preachers who can build churches on their pulpit work alone are very rare. Paul was a good pastor. He knew his people and they knew him. He knew them by name. Recall the names mentioned by Paul in one epistle: Phoebe, Priscilla, Aquila, Epenetus, Mary, Andronicus, Junias, Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Appelles, Aristobulus, Herodion, Narcissus, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologus, Julia, Nereus, Olympas, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus, Quartus.

The preacher who cannot remember the names of his people is at a serious disadvantage. Let him

practice the association of faces and names until he can readily recall the name of every one with whom he speaks. Let him do this when he is young, for it is almost impossible to acquire the habit when old. Let him guard against that carelessness which tricks the mind so that with increased age one has to be introduced many times before the preacher knows him.

(3) Its reasoning. Paul was not a professional controversialist. He did not seek disputes. He was a logical, forceful, convincing preacher. He was equally at home in a Jewish synagogue, on Mars Hill, and in a philosopher's school. His stock of knowledge was so abundant and arranged so orderly that he could deliver a matchless impromptu address in Athens or reason daily for two years in the school of Tyrannus at Ephesus. The old Greek philosopher had a motto: "I carry all my goods with me." Paul was always ready to answer questions or meet any occasion. If you want a sample of the logic of Paul read the eighth chapter of Romans, where he piles Pelion on Ossa in proving the believers' security in Christ.

(4) Its persuasiveness. Paul was not a cold, intellectual preacher. There is no necessary incompatibility between education and sympathy, between logic and pathos. Indeed, logic and education beget sympathy and pathos. If Paul reasoned he also persuaded. He served the Lord in Ephesus "with all humility and with tears." Oh, the tears of Paul! How touching, how melting! Twice he refers to his tears for the Ephesians (Acts 20:19, 31) and once for the Philippians (Phil. 3:18). They evoked tears in others. It was on his neck that the elders fell and wept and kissed him, sorrowing especially

that they were to behold his face no more.* Like Goldsmith's pastor in the Deserted Village:

"He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
And as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds and led the way."

If some preachers are too lachrymose, others are too dry-eyed. In every congregation there are heavy hearts longing for sympathy. Preaching should reach the heart, and to do this it must come from the heart. The most appealing voice I ever heard in song was that of Frank W. Cunningham, known as Richmond's "sweet singer." A few years before he died he took me as his guest to hear a widely-advertised and well-known singer from New York. The auditorium was crowded and the singer sang masterpieces and popular airs in a wonderful natural voice which had been enriched by the best training. As we were leaving the concert I remarked: "Captain, he had a well-modulated voice, with a wide range, but it did not touch my heart. What was the matter?" We had reached a brilliant electric light. He stopped and, pointing his finger to his heart, replied: "He didn't have it in here. If you haven't got it in here you can't sing." And, pointing his finger to my heart, said: "And you can't preach either."

5. This was a separated church. "But when some were hardened and believed not, speaking evil of the way before the multitude, he departed from

* In Moody's "Notes from My Bible" is a simple, suggestive analysis of the tears at Ephesus. (1) Tears of personal suffering, verse 19. (2) Tears of pastoral solicitude, verse 31. (3) Tears of friendly sympathy, verse 37.

them and separated the disciples." There was a line of demarcation drawn between that church and the world. It had power in the community because it established a new social living as well as a religion and demanded that all the relations between man and man be regulated on Christian principles. The worldly, unconverted element in the churches neutralizes or nullifies the efforts of the churches. The mixed multitudes from Egypt longed for the flesh-pots and spread treason in Moses' camp. If a church has too little influence over a community it is because the community has too much influence over that church. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate from them, saith the Lord." The church that cannot discipline cannot live. You cut your finger. Blood poison sets in. An amputation of the finger, or the hand, or the arm, is necessary to save your life. If you are not strong enough for that amputation you must die. The church which has in it a disorderly member, too rich or influential to be disciplined, is a decaying church.

In the matter of church discipline we have often tithed the mint, anise and cummin and neglected the weightier matters of the law. Discipline is here used in the common acceptation of the term rather than in the etymological sense of training. Much has been made of the foibles and frivolities of the young and little of the common sins of the mature and well-to-do. Take dancing as an example. It is a form of worldliness which is to be discountenanced. Its chief dangers are that it first despiritualizes then demoralizes its devotees. It is perhaps the one big temptation of the young. It breaks out on them like measles in children, but if handled

tenderly and tactfully most of the sufferers can be saved to the cause.

Comparatively speaking, covetousness is a more common and far more harmful and egregious sin, though it is rarely dealt with as a ground of discipline *per se.* In a certain church years ago, about three months after the pastorate began, a deacon brought up before the deacons' meeting the name of a young lady member who had danced the week before in a private home. He wished her to be excluded forthwith. The young pastor sat silent while the various deacons expressed their opinions. Some were for prompt action, some were for conciliation, and the wisest one suggested a proper committee to visit the young lady. The chairman of the board asked the young pastor his opinion. He replied: "Brethren, I have preferred to listen rather than to speak. It is a little disconcerting to have a question of discipline raised so early in my first pastorate. Since it has come up I would suggest that you go into the matter thoroughly. Do not make this young woman the only case. Covetousness is denounced in the Scriptures far more than dancing. It is declared to be idolatry. God says the covetous will not be saved. Let us go over the treasurer's books and cite, to appear before this board, the members of this church who are guilty of covetousness, as well as the young lady who is guilty of dancing."

It was time for the deacons to be silent. The silence was painful. The pastor and others knew that the deacon who brought up the case of the young lady was a skinflint and, while very lavish in his criticisms of young people, was never known to give a dollar to missions. That young lady was visited by the pastor and led from worldliness to

consecration and is now the president of the Woman's Missionary Society in a New Testament church.

6. It was a missionary church. "All who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." This province included the whole western coast of our Asia Minor and a considerable interior region. That territory was evangelized in three years. Paul did not do it in person. He was in Ephesus the whole time (Acts 20:17). He had not been seen by face in Laodicea (Col. 2:1). People from the surrounding territory heard him, were converted, and carried the good news back to their home communities. Christians from Ephesus went afield and preached to both Jews and Greeks. Native visitors to Ephesus or deputed missionaries like Epaphras penetrated with the gospel every Asiatic town and district. Churches were constituted in Troas, Assos, Adramyttium, Miletus, Trogylleum, Hierapolis, Colosse, Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The church started in Thyatira by Lydia doubtless received accessions and impetus from the missionary center at Ephesus. There is no parallel in the history of Christian missions to the zeal and success of the church at Ephesus in propagating the gospel and establishing churches.

The purpose for which a church exists is missions. Take out of a church the missionary idea and you have a ship without a port, an athlete without a goal, a soldier without an order, a life without an objective. You have a barren tree that cumbers the ground, an empty house over whose door is written "Ichabod." Limit the gospel in its scope or power and you cut its heart out. Charles Wesley was

right: "Take back my interest in thy blood unless it flows for all the race." Christ lived and died for all men. The business of the church is to make Him known to all men. Our Christian religion revolves around two foci: "Come" and "Go." Every one who accepts the invitation "Come" must hear immediately the imperative command "Go." It was our Lord's most frequent, His perpetual, command. It is the key to the parables. It is the beginning and the end of the model prayer: "Thy kingdom come . . . for thine is the kingdom." It is the driving wheel of the machinery of a church or denomination. Stop that wheel and the machinery is motionless and useless. It is the authority for Christian education. Colleges and seminaries were founded to fit men to "go." When they cease so to function they ought to be revitalized or buried. It was none other than President Harper who said, a short time before his death, when he appears to have made a revaluation of the verities and vitalities of our holy religion: "It would be a calamity if the educational institutions founded by our fathers to foster the Christian faith should come in time to destroy the very faith they were founded to foster."

The church at Ephesus grew by giving out. A religion not worth giving away is not fit to keep at home. The charter of the American Board of Foreign Missions was under consideration by the Massachusetts legislature. A member spoke: "I am opposed to it; we haven't enough religion for home use, much less to give to the world, to export to foreign lands." A wise man rose and replied: "Sir, I have this to say, when our religion is of this character the more we export of it the more we

have left of it; and the more we believe in this gospel and give it to all the world, the more do we believe in it and receive it as the bread of life at home." The same principle is in the couplet:

"There was a man, they called him mad,
The more he gave away, the more he had."

Some of our brethren, well meaning, to be sure, have allowed themselves to be thrown on the defensive. They speak mostly against error, they write numerous books against heresy, they guard zealously the palladium of orthodoxy. Dryness, pessimism, and bitterness are the logical results. Judaism stood on the defensive and failed. Christ began an active, aggressive, world-conquering war. He founded the universal religion for all men over the whole earth; the ultimate religion, not to be displaced by something better, but to last till time ends; the complete religion, to be preserved by propagation until it shall prevail among all nations. He leads His army. "Lo, I go before you into Galilee." Who would have companionship with Him must march forward as He leads the way into all heathen lands.

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar,
Who follows in His train?
Who best can drink his cup of woe
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears his cross below,
He follows in His train."

When the noble Bruce, hero of Bannockburn, died his heart was extracted and encased in a silver

casket by the Black Douglas and carried with the army. Douglas died fighting the Moors. Before he fell he threw the heart of Bruce into the thickest of the fray and urged his soldiers to follow that heart and conquer. Christ's heart is in the densest of heathenism and Christians must have their hearts there if they would feel His heart throb.

A tender scene was witnessed in Boston the first Lord's day after the death of Pastor A. J. Gordon. Some of his devoted members met in the study and talked over their pastor's first Sabbath in heaven. They asked: "What would most gratify Dr. Gordon for us to do to-day?" The church was contributing twenty thousand dollars annually to foreign missions. A brother spoke: "I know what would most gratify Dr. Gordon, and that is, if his congregation, on this the first Sabbath of his ascent into the presence of his glorified Lord, would seek with all their hearts to carry out our Saviour's last words to men: 'Go ye and preach the gospel to all the world.' Let us give such a contribution to-day as this church has never given before." The heart of those laymen responded to what was nearest the heart of their departed pastor for it was nearest to the heart of his risen Lord.

7. This was a church accredited by special miracles. God brought about remarkable miracles through Paul's instrumentality. His aprons and handkerchiefs were carried to the sick and they recovered from their ailments, or the evil spirits left them. "Superstition," you say. The woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment may have been somewhat superstitious, but Christ healed her. Those who laid their sick where Peter's shadow might fall on them may have been tinged with

superstition, but every sick one was healed. Why may not the true God bless a superstitious soul, provided he is honestly seeking God's power and provided his faith is directed towards Him? Is not every one superstitious to some extent?

Miracles are recorded throughout the Bible. At critical periods they were more numerous than under normal conditions. For instance: the period of Moses, when Israel was being delivered and the law was being enacted; the period of Joshua, when Israel was being established in Palestine; the period of Elijah and Elisha, when the worship of the true God was being vindicated; the period of Jesus, when God was revealing and declaring His Son. The reason for such special miracles is two-fold. (1) Satan's aggressiveness. (2) God's credentials. That was precisely the situation in Ephesus. Demonology was rampant. Demons were multitudinous, defiant, disastrous. They ran the business, ruled the politics, ruined the morals, and regulated the worship of the city. A miraculous display of God's power was necessary to counteract their influence and to dethrone their power.

Romanists cite this incident as a precedent for the use of relics. Against their gross superstition four things may be said: (1) The vital issue was whether behind the handkerchiefs and aprons there was a living man, and within that man, a living or a dead Christ. Christ was alive in Paul and it was the living Christ who wrought the unusual signs; (2) Paul built no fabric of ecclesiastical ceremony on this incident. It was not practiced elsewhere nor mentioned in any of his writings; (3) He emancipated the Ephesians from the thraldom of superstition and after the burning of the books of incan-

tation, no more is heard of the use of handkerchiefs and aprons as charms against disease; (4) He substitutes for such devices the Christian armor received directly from God, not acquired from some saint at some shrine. "The impotence which applied aprons and napkins was transformed into the power which girds the loins with truth, bears proudly the shield of faith, carries aloft the saving helmet and wields, hither and thither, the two-edged sword of the Spirit."

8. This church exposed and overthrew a counterfeit Christianity. The extraordinary miracles of Paul incited some wandering Jewish exorcists to undertake to invoke the name of Jesus and thus cast out evil spirits. Seven sons of a priest made the futile attempt upon a certain demon-possessed man. This man detected their deception, sprang on two of them, overmastered them both, and treated them with such violence that they fled from the house naked and wounded. A scene ensued on the streets, two unclad, bleeding men exposed to public gaze. The report spread like a prairie fire. All the people of Ephesus came to know what happened. Terror was widespread and the name of the Lord Jesus began to be held in high honor.

The temptation to imitate a success is strong. The mistake of Sceva's sons was that they tried to reproduce Paul's results by imitation, when they did not have his power. They were not the last imitators. Every strong, successful, outstanding preacher has his imitators. They usually seize upon an eccentricity. Dr. Broadus had stooped shoulders. Some of his students bent their shoulders in ridiculous affectation. Dr. Carroll wore a long beard and spoke with slow deliberation and in deep

tones. Twenty years after college days I heard one of the Baylor ministerial students in a remote section. His beard had been sedulously grown until it reached almost to his belt. His manner was a ludicrous attempt to simulate Dr. Carroll. Had it not been in the house of God, we should have laughed at the miserable mimicry. Now it is the long hair or the earnest tones or the acrobatic stunts of some distinguished pastor or evangelist. How long will it take us to learn that preaching is truth coming to men through personality; that God never wanted one man to be some other man; that every man does his work best when he lets God use his individuality; that a second-hand gospel never was effective?

Devils are the test of God. Aaron's rod ate up the rods of the magicians and thus proved that he was God's man. Jesus cast out devils and was thereby declared to be the Son of God with power. The demon-possessed man fell on the impostors and exposed them. The theology of the study is tested by the devils on the street. Do your messages draw, win, and hold men? Do your doctrines cast out evil? If not, revise your messages, reconstruct your theology. Paul preached a first-hand gospel, an experimental religion, a personal ever-living Christ; and His other true preachers do the same.

Never were so many religions seeking the support of men as to-day. Russellism, Dowieism, Unitarianism, Mormonism, Christian Science, Theosophy, Adventism, and a score of other "isms." We need churches like that at Ephesus to expose and overthrow all counterfeits. Not so much by attacking them as by showing a better way; not so much

by doctrines as by deeds; not so much by fine organization as by noble living; not so much by natural superiority as by supernatural power. The supernatural in Christianity validates and vitalizes it as the supreme religion.

9. Backsliders were reclaimed. Many of those who believed and indulged in the practice of magical arts brought their books together and burned them to the value of fifty thousand silver coins. These "books," or "Ephesian Letters," were certain magical incantations written on parchments and used as the negro wears a rabbit foot, for good luck, or as the fake doctor mumbles a jumble of nonsense to his credulous patient. The church at Ephesus won its members away from this vile and vicious literature. The account reads like the days of Savonarola in Florence when worldly women made a bonfire of their costliest jewels in their abandonment of pleasure to live the dedicated life.

The backslider is as omnipresent as the poor. He is a more trying problem. The pastor grieves as he sees the church members slowly, surely sliding back to the world. Despite his solicitude and care a few grow cold, indifferent, worldly. He covets the church atmosphere which will warm, enlist and consecrate them. A backslidden member of Phillips Brooks' parish called at the study to request that his name be dropped from the roll. Dr. Brooks reminded him that the step he proposed was a serious one and appealed to him to reconsider. The man was insistent. Just then, a poorly clad lad entered the study bearing a note scribbled in lead pencil on soiled and crumpled paper. The minister read it. Addressing his caller, Dr. Brooks said: "My friend, this is an appeal from a poor, sick

woman for a visit and help. I must go to a funeral in a few minutes. Would you be good enough to go along with this lad to his home and learn what his mother needs and supply her?" "Certainly, Dr. Brooks, I shall gladly do that for you and for her." The boy led the way from the imposing structure, down the wide street, to narrower streets and, finally, into an alley and to a shanty where the half-open door, held by one hinge, led into an unlighted room. As the man stepped into that little haunt of squalor and disease the half-blinded woman began to speak: "Oh, Dr. Brooks, I knew you would come! You are God's man. You always come to the call of trouble. I am sick and hungry, but I want you first to pray for me. Please pray."

The man had not prayed in years. What should he do? He hesitated, he thought to tell her who he was. She pleaded, "Oh, pray for me." His heart would not let him refuse any request from a case like this. He dropped on his knees. The first sentence was a petition for his poor backslidden soul. The woman knew it was not Dr. Brooks; who it was she could not imagine. Soon, the ashes of indifference were blown from the altar of the prayer's heart and the fires of devotion burned again. He besought the Throne for this distressed woman and closed the prayer. Addressing her: "My dear woman, you have discovered that I am not Dr. Brooks. I am the most worthless Christian in Boston. Dr. Brooks is conducting a funeral and sent me to help you. Oh, how you have helped me! What do you need?" She told him anything would be appreciated. There was no food, fuel or medicine. He asked the boy to accompany him. He went to a store, filled a basket with fruit and dainties,

and gave it to the boy for his mother. He ordered groceries, medicine and coal sent, and charged to himself. Then he hurried back to the pastor's study. Soon Dr. Brooks returned from the cemetery. The man stepped forward. His hand was extended, his eyes were tearful, his voice mellow: "Oh, Dr. Brooks, I don't want to be dropped from the roll, I'm all right now, sir, I'm all right now."

10. Sinners were saved. "So mightily did the Lord's message spread and triumph." The gospel was both extensive and intensive. The stages of its progress were: (1) The populace, brought face to face with the supernatural, magnified the name of Jesus (v. 17). (2) The magicians, frightened by the fate of the exorcists, and seeing the difference between the power of Jesus and their own futile arts, abandoned their magic (v. 19). (3) The whole city was brought under the power of the gospel to such an extent that it "prevailed" (v. 20). Men like Tychicus, Epaphras, Philemon, and Trophimus were converted. It was his friendliness with Trophimus in Jerusalem that eventually cost Paul his life. Some of the Asiarchs, public officials who managed the community entertainments, were admirers of Paul and joined with his disciples in keeping him from jeopardizing his life before the mob in the theater. Literally thousands who were dominated by the world, the flesh and the devil, were saved (Eph. 2:2). Idolators turned from Diana to Christ. The temple was deserted of its worshipers, the craftsmen bereft of their gain, and the life of the entire city transformed by the saving grace of God preached in, and by this church.

A church reforms a community by saving the

individuals in that community. It saves those individuals by preaching "the redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding" (Eph. 1:7f). It teaches the saved to "put off, as concerns your former conduct, the old man who is being corrupted according to the desires of deceit, and be renewed in the Spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who was created after God in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Eph. 4:22f). These were the methods, moral and spiritual, by which was broken up the monopoly for making silver models of the great heathen temple and the images of the Ephesian Diana. These were the indirect, effective tactics by which the leading sin of the city was undermined and the Christless craftsmen, who commercialized religion, put out of business. This was the church which realized unity in Christ while its adversaries in a bedlam of voices shouted, some one thing and some another. This was the church which stood calm, collected, conquering, while the craftsmen's union rioted and went to pieces. This was the church which, though not meddling with the state, nevertheless molded the state, while the religious fanatics who united with the state suffered chagrin and the loss of prestige.

CHAPTER VI

COLOSSE—THE HERETICAL CHURCH

Colosse was a town church. It was about one hundred miles west of Ephesus, in the upper part of the valley of the Lycus river. Down the course of the stream ten miles, on the south bank, was Laodicea, and thirteen miles, on the north bank, was Hierapolis. Though never as large or rich as its sister communities it was of strategic value in the ages of the Persian and Greek empires. Xerxes' hordes halted here on their march to Thermopylae, where the Spartan guards were annihilated, and to Athens, which was laid in ruins, and to Salamis, where the Persian fleet was destroyed. Eighty years later Cyrus the younger, patron of Asia Minor, with his ten thousand Greeks and one hundred thousand barbarians, halted a week at Colosse on his ill-fated but anabasis-famed expedition against his brother Artaxerxes at Cunaxa. Strabo, the geographer for the Christian era, describes Colosse as a "small town."

The three communities, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse, each had a Christian church. Laodicea has become the type of tepid religion for all time; no characteristic of Hierapolis has survived; and Colosse was the object of attack by the most dangerous heresy of the Apostolic period. The three churches were constituted during Paul's three years' ministry in Ephesus, but not by Paul in person. He did not visit the communities and was not

known by face to many of the members (2:1). Yet he addressed them in a fatherly manner as his spiritual children. The constituent members were converted under his preaching in Ephesus, or by the Christians who operated from Ephesus as a base in the evangelization of pro-consular Asia. The organizer of the church was probably Epaphras, a native evangelist. He seems to have preached regularly in the three communities which were in a day's walk of each other. As we would say to-day, his "field" consisted of three mission stations which grew into churches.

One must admire evangelist-pastor, Epaphras, as he is depicted in Col. 1:6f; 4:12f; Philemon 23. (1) He was the first to preach the gospel to his home town. (2) Through him his hearers came readily to know the grace of God. (3) He was honored as a dearly beloved fellow bond-servant whose life of humble surrender to his Lord was associated with the similar life of Paul. (4) He was so sound and sane, so zealous and useful, so faithful and true, that Paul speaks of him as a sort of personal substitute for himself with the Colossians. (5) He wears worthily the title "minister of Christ," which is twice applied to him. He was an example of what Paul urged upon Timothy, "a good minister of Jesus Christ." (6) In a perplexing situation he had the good sense to seek the counsel of the most competent adviser he knew. (7) He was so magnanimous, so just, and so truthful that he reported the admirable traits of his people, while informing Paul of their perils. (8) He maintained a deep personal interest in his people of the three churches, when separated from them by long distance and sojourning in the capital of the world. (9) He ceased not

to wrestle in prayer for his wavering congregation, that they might stand firm. (10) He was not ashamed or afraid to become Paul's fellow *prisoner,* at a time when Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke were his only fellow-workers. Blessings on you, Brother Epaphras! Than thou, there is not a sweeter character in the New Testament!

Our information about the church at Colosse is derived from two letters by Paul: one to the church and another to Philemon, a Christian of the community, and we suppose a member of this church. Colosse was the least important of the churches included in these studies. The heresies discussed in the letter to the church are vague and difficult for the reader to understand or appreciate. This volume is not intended to be abstruse. Justice to the plan of the book, however, requires us to deal here with mystical, philosophical subjects of little interest to practical Christians of our times. It is hoped that we may not get lost in the mazes and, furthermore, that important lessons may be drawn for current thought and action. True it is that the mysterious circumstances of the mystical philosophy in Colosse was the occasion which Paul used for unfolding the "radiant mystery of the Person and Work of Christ."

In the valley of the Lycus a terrible foe attacked Christianity from within. It was hoary with age, of oriental origin, of subtle approach, and of fearful force. Its incipient presence in Colosse explains Epaphras' visit to Paul in Rome to seek advice as how best to handle the heresy. Paul, Peter, John, and Jude all exposed the fallacies and dangers of this doctrine and presented its true antidote. Still it persisted. A council was held at Laodicea later

on in the fourth century. The livest question considered was the very issue we discover insinuating itself into the church in these early years, six years after it was founded.

1. The doctrinal side of the heresy. It was twofold. (1) Judaistic. The form was broader than that which turned back the changeable Galatians. It was Pharisaic in its ritualism and Essenic in its asceticism. Paul argues that Levitical food regulations and holy days were shadowy and typical (2:16f). In that one statement is a sufficient answer to the Seventh Day Adventists. He insists that their circumcision was not performed by hand but they threw off their sinful nature in true Christian, spiritual circumcision (2:11). That should have settled whatever of Judaism survived the letter to the Galatians. He reminds them that they had been buried with Christ in baptism, in the river Lycus which flowed through the town, and raised with Him through the faith of the energy of God who raised Him from among the dead (2:12). If any one wants other proof than the sixth of Romans of the mode and meaning of baptism, this one verse, added to that, should fully satisfy him that it was a putting under the water as a symbolic burial to past sins and a coming up out of the water as a portraiture of the new life to be lived. Paul reverts to his standard of doctrine, fully expounded in Romans and Galatians, that we are saved not by law but by grace (2:14). The bond which we gave to keep the law was beyond our ability to pay. Christ cleared it out of the way by nailing it to his Cross. The bond was canceled by him on Calvary.

(2) Gnostic. The gnostics were the "knowing" ones. Gnosticism was an attempt to pervert Chris-

tianity by learning and speculation. It repudiated external revelation and assumed to reach knowledge subjectively. In fact, Gnosticism was rather a philosophy than a religion; more interested in systems of the universe than in worship; concerned more about the deliverance of philosophers from matter than the redemption of mankind from sin. The later Gnostic schools attacked the gospel from three angles. They denied: (a) its historical basis; (b) its claims to authority; (c) its doctrine of the spiritual freedom and equality of men.

In Colosse, Gnosticism was a tendency rather than a habit. (a) It was a disposition to deny the direct agency of God in creation. (b) It was a disposition to inculcate the worship of angels and other mysterious powers of the universe.

2. The practical side of the heresy. Judaistic and Gnostic theories were so inextricably interwoven in Colosse that it is impossible to be sure just where one ends and the other begins. Combined or separate they (1) Insisted upon rigorous asceticism; (2) Taught strict observance of Jewish ceremonial; (3) Arrogantly claimed special enlightenment in spiritual things. Among the Gnostics we detect the first trace of Mariolatry, images, transubstantiation and gorgeous ceremonialism.

3. The effects of the doctrine and practice. The general doctrinal effects were to obscure, if not to deny, the deity of Christ, the nature of sin, and redemption through the Cross. The practical effects were: (1) Monasticism; (2) Antinomianism. These opposite results were the bitter fruits of the same tree. The extremes met in this philosophy. The process of reasoning which led to monasticism was as follows: Matter is evil. Sin resides

in the body. Therefore, to get rid of sin, be an ascetic. The process of reasoning which led to the license of Antinomianism was: Sin attaches to the body only. It cannot touch the soul. Therefore, live the Epicurean life. You will not be punished for indulgence because you will be freed from the body, the instrumentality of sin, at death. Gnosticism was contrasted by Paul (I Tim. 1:20) with the deposit of faith in four particulars. (1) It is irreligious and frivolous talk. (2) It is falsely called knowledge. (3) It is controversial and boastful. (4) It leads to apostasy from the faith.

4. The antidote for the heresy. The truth of the gospel is the counteractant to this dangerous tendency. That truth is the real nature, office, mission and method of Christ. As to His nature: He is the visible representation of the invisible God; the First Born and Lord of all creation; the creator, conserver, and consummation of all things; before all things and the power which preserves the harmony of the universe; the abiding embodiment of the fullness of God's nature; the source of Christian excellence; superior to all ranks of heavenly beings and universally supreme. As to His office: He is head of the church as an institution, conceived of under the figure of an organism, giving to it life, unity and government; He is the mediator through whom every one may come into God's presence full-grown. As to His mission: It was to secure the release of the captives of sin; to reconcile the estranged to God; to convey a vast wealth of glory to those who received Him; to impart the full knowledge of God's truth, which is Himself; to give life with Himself; to triumph over all hostile powers and be reënthroned at God's right hand. As to

His method: It was through his blood which was shed upon the cross to effect reconciliation (1:20); in His human body by death to bring them holy, faultless and irreproachable into His presence (1:22); by nailing the legal requirements to his cross (2:14); by a decisive and signal triumph by the cross (2:14). To sum up: God, incarnated in Christ, the mediator and head of the church, procured the forgiveness of sins, and all consequent blessings, through the redemption wrought out by His death upon the cross.

5. The Gnostic dangers of our day. Think not that the heresy of the Lycus valley is dead. Christianity has no foe more to be warned against. Colleges and universities are its haunt and habitat. Would-be-wise professors undermine Christian monotheism with their gnostic cosmogony; they undermine Christian practice by separating knowledge from action, and they undermine the very basis of the gospel by explaining away its history. The emanations from God through endless aeons to man are no more sophistical than the ageless evolution by which certain scientists trace the development from amoeba to man, only the process is the reverse; the ancient Gnostic reasoned on a descending scale, the modern Gnostics reason on the ascending scale. Both deny the deity of Christ, the supreme authority of the inspired revelation and the vicarious atonement. Both are speculative, frigid, reptilian philosophies. They have no power to warm the cold heart, to reclaim the wayward life, to promote vast missionary enterprises, to impassion a soul with zeal for Christ. They produce dilettanti who are made tepid by over-culture, or intellectual cormorants made heavy by too much

undigested information, or swingeing skeptics made egotistical by "science falsely so called,"

> "Some doctor full of phrase and fame,
> To shake his sapient head, and give
> The ill he cannot cure a name."

There are institutions founded and maintained by the money of earnest, unquestioning Christians where Christ's name is rarely mentioned, where his miraculous birth is scouted, where his bodily resurrection is rejected as absurd, and where his atoning sacrifice is mocked as an outrage on justice. There are others without the courage to express their heresy who compromise by silence on these doctrines and content themselves by talks on character, Jesus being the ideal and God the Father of all men.

The time has arrived when the first group, who are destroying the faith of the young, should be exposed as Paul and Jude exposed the heretics long ago; when they should be shunned in Christian organizations as John shunned Cerinthus in the bath. The day is approaching when denominations ought to say to the second group: "The only abiding character is Christian; the only Jesus of the gospels was the unique Son of God; the only way responsible sinners become children of God is by faith in Jesus Christ. We do not ask you to teach what you do not believe, but we do say if you do not believe, teach and practice these truths you do not fill the requirements for instructors or leaders of our young people." It were no worse for a chemist to poison the food the students eat than to poison their minds with false science. Better destroy the human life

than wreck the immortal soul. It is not a question of "moral freedom," of "intellectual liberty." Such pleas are nonsense. The question is far deeper. It is a question of personal honor.

To illustrate my meaning: The night I was ordained to the gospel ministry in the First Baptist Church of Waco, Texas, September, 1899, the Presbytery, consisting of B. H. Carroll, A. W. McGaha, J. G. Kendall and other brethren, asked what seemed to me to be every possible question on doctrine, faith and practice. When the ordination was over and the congregation dismissed, Professor Schauss, Director of Music in Baylor University, who had known me through my college course from '94-'98, waited an opportunity to speak to me privately. He was a cordial soul, highly educated in the arts and sciences, a devout believer and a friend of all the students. He had breathed, without contamination, the atmosphere of the universities of his native land. A hearty handshake and a "God bless you in your life work" from him abide with me now. Also, a remark he made has recurred a thousand times. It was this: "George, had I been a member of that Presbytery there is one question I should like to have asked." "Why, Professor, I thought Dr. Carroll asked every question he could think of and that surely was enough for one night. What is your question?" Said he, "My question is this: Should you ever find yourself out of harmony with the doctrines to which you have subscribed to-night, and in the confidence of which this church ordains you, what are you going to do? Are you going to try and reform your denomination, or are you going to have the honor, manhood and character to surrender your credentials, as a Baptist minister, to

the denomination whose views you no longer represent?'' My instant reply was: ''I'll be honest and surrender my credentials.''

Now, that Instructor in Music went to the very crux of the matter with his question. That is the principle which underlies the ministry and Christian education. One has no moral right to undo what he is expected to do; to pull down what he is ordained or elected to build up. The denomination does not fetter thought, it puts no limits on investigation; but it ought to say: ''Should you find yourself out of harmony with our cherished and historic principles we shall expect you to have the honor to surrender your position.'' It is not honest to accept the financial support of a church or denomination and undermine the faith you are appointed to uphold. It is like getting money ''under false pretenses,'' an indictable offense under the law of the land. It is fraudulent. It is the heresy of Simon Magus from the motive of Balaam.

It is important to remember that the Gnostics were schools of thought inside the churches rather than sects outside them. They were, on that account, the more harmful. On the outside, they could not have the approach they enjoyed as members of the churches; they would not be classed as of the Christians and thereby denied the opportunity to work insidiously from within. They were too smart for that. Simon Magus identified himself with the believers in Samaria. Jude says: ''I find myself constrained to write and cheer you on to the vigorous defense of the faith delivered once for all to God's people. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed; men spoken of in ancient writings as pre-destined to this condemnation, ungodly men.

who pervert the grace of our God into an excuse for immorality, and disown Jesus Christ, our only Sovereign Lord." Paul warns against some one in the church at Colosse who leads astray by means of his philosophy and idle fancies, following human traditions and the world's crude notions instead of following Christ.

Operation from the inside was the subtle way of the Gnostics. They were content with common Christianity for common people. That was well for the uneducated masses, but they themselves were enlightened and lived in a higher realm of intellectuality. Ordinary Christians were the natural men; they themselves were the spiritual who possessed the true knowledge. The object was to avoid secession and, by remaining in the churches, draw to themselves all who aspired to learning and culture. He who runs may read the same thing in the churches of the United States. A small group of "intellectuals" in colleges, universities and theological seminaries retain church membership; but by their thoughts, words and actions they belie the very nature and command of the Christ upon whom a church is founded. "Wise ones," they think themselves to be. They are such only in their own conceit. Those who are doing the work of the Kingdom know these "wise ones" have little evangelistic zeal, use the churches often for selfish purposes and congeal the fountains of spirituality with an arctic temperature.

Well may lovers of our divine Lord and Saviour have a care for what is taught in our educational institutions, both denominational and state. The professor has our sons and daughters at a period of life under circumstances when they are peculiarly

susceptible to impressions. A godly teacher, like John A. Broadus or Noah K. Davis, can cast the young in the orthodox mold that will insure peace of mind, salvation of soul, and usefulness of life. A skeptical professor can shake by one stroke the structure of belief constructed by parents and pastors through the years antedating college. An educator, indifferent to Christian activities, can by his very example, and without a word of criticism, paralyze the Christian energies of a student beyond the power of the churches to revitalize in all the succeeding years.

Christianity is the patron of learning, but it claims all knowledge for Christ. It insists that knowledge bow to Him who is the fullness of knowledge. It won the Athenian philosopher Aristides whose eloquent apology impressed the emperor Hadrian; it called to its defense Justin Martyr, who had vainly sought divine knowledge in the schools of Zeno, of Aristotle, of Pythagoras and of Plato; it received the homage of the Greek scholar, Clement of Alexandria; the Latin scholar, Tertullian; the learned Julius Africanus and Origen, and the public teachers of rhetoric, Cyprian and Lactantius; it was professed and supported by philosophers distinguished for their genius and learning, such as Tatian, Athenagorae, Theophilus of Antioch, Hegesippus, Melito, Miltiades, Pontaenus, and Anamonius. One cannot know too much for a Christian, provided that what he knows is real knowledge, not speculation. To the Agnostics Paul replies, "We know." To the Gnostics he replies, "We know in part." Some day, in the clear light of heaven, "we shall know even also as we are known."

A skeptical historian who made a careful and

critical study of early Christianity stated the case of philosophy and Christianity thus: "Even the study of philosophy was at length introduced among the Christians, but it was not always productive of the most salutary effects; knowledge was as often the parent of heresy as of devotion, and the description which was designed for the followers of Artemon may, with equal propriety, be applied to the various sects which resisted the successors of the Apostles." "They presume to alter the Holy Scriptures, to abandon the ancient rule of faith, and to form their opinions according to the subtle precepts of logic. The science of the church is neglected for the study of geometry, and they lose sight of heaven while they are employed in measuring the earth. . . . Their errors are derived from the abuse of the arts and sciences of the infidels, and they corrupt the simplicity of the gospel by the refinements of human reason." The world may with equal propriety find application of this in the twentieth century.

Certain deductions may be made from the church at Colosse.

1. The leaders belonged to the better social class of families. The humble and uneducated predominated in the churches of Macedonia and Achaia. It was somewhat different in the churches of Asia Minor. Timothy belonged to the educated class at Lystra. His father was an Hellene, a wealthy man of the non-Roman population, a person of social standing whom an orthodox Jewess was proud to marry. Anatolia, the district in western Asia Minor, from Paul's time onward was noted for the exceptional learning, wealth and rank of its leaders. See "Pauline and Other Studies," by Ramsay, page

375f. Nymphas lived in comfort, if not affluence, at Laodicea, and a church met in this house. Philemon, a prosperous land and slaveholder, was an outstanding Christian in Colosse. A church met in his commodious home. Though rich, his fervent faith and religious activities created an atmosphere in his family in which his own son, Archippus, entered the gospel ministry. Richard Fuller, James P. Boyce, H. A. Tupper, Sr., and William D. Thomas heard the call to preach in homes like Philemon's.

We have too few recruits for the ministry nowadays and rarely one from the aristocratic families. Do these families look upon the ministry as the most exalted of vocations? Is the atmosphere of their homes so permeated with devotion that their sons come logically to think of preaching as their life work? I heard Lieut.-Gov. J. Taylor Ellyson say before a dozen district associations in Virginia, "I have only one child and she has one son. I would rather he would be a Baptist preacher than to win any honor or emolument men can bestow." When parents have such ambitions more sons of the well-to-do will enlist in the ranks of the preachers.

The reproach that the Christians were invariably of low birth is not supported by facts. Tertullian threw down the challenge to the proconsul of Africa by assuring him that if he persisted in his cruel intentions he must decimate Carthage, and he would find among the guilty many persons of his own rank, "senators and matrons of noblest extraction, and friends or relations of his most intimate friends." The elegant Pliny gave unsuspected testimony to the rank of Christians in his famous letter to the Emperor Trajan, in which he states that multitudes

of persons in Bithynia of *every order* had deserted the religion of their ancestors and avowed Christianity. By the way, there can be desired no stronger evidence for the scope and power of Christianity than the governor's letter.

2. The interchange of letters between churches. Paul wrote and sent two letters at the same time by Tychicus. One was to "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse" and the other, possibly the epistle to the Ephesians, was sent to Laodicea. Instructions were given that when the letter to Colosse had been read publicly before the congregation, it was to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and Colosse in turn was to read the one sent to the Laodiceans. Letters are written to be read. The first letter Paul wrote contained this direction: "I solemnly charge you in the Lord's name to have this letter read to all the brethren" (I Thess. 5:27). The apostolic writings had divine authority. They contained a body of doctrine for all the churches then, since, now, and forever. The striking feature in the present instance is that the particular problem in each of these two churches was so similar that a letter to one was almost equally appropriate to the other.

If the assumption is correct that the general epistle to the Ephesians is the letter referred to, as also to the Laodiceans, then an interesting similarity exists between Colossians and Ephesians. For example:

(1) Christ the head of the church. Colossians: "He is the head of the body, the church." Ephesians: "And gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body." This view of our Lord's position and function is confined to these

letters and there are two other parallels in them under the same figure.

(2) Christ's supremacy over angelic powers. Colossians: "And ye are made full in Him, who is the head of every principality and authority." Ephesians: "For above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion." Evidently angel worship was derogating from the supremacy of Christ in several churches.

(3) Reconciliation through the death of Christ. Colossians: "And through him to reconcile all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross." Ephesians: "And might reconcile both in one body to God through the cross." At least thirty other parallels can be collected, but these three suffice to show how fitting was the interchange of the letters.

3. A liberalizing doctrinal drift. The intellectual character of the church doubtless facilitated the liberalizing tendency. Churches of culture and wealth are more susceptible to ritualism and gnosticism. They are tempted to-day to appeal to the élite. By elaborate ceremonialism they appeal to the esthetic nature. Pastors of such churches need to be rooted and grounded in the faith lest they be carried along by the drift. He who yields to the spell loses his spiritual ardor and soul-saving power. The church which is inoculated with this virus becomes a "family church," or a social club.

Syncretists are as busy now as in the seventeenth century endeavoring to unite various systems and sects on the principle of liberalism. I am impelled to quote the timely words of the scholarly principal, P. T. Forsyth. Discussing the critical challenge to faith, he says: "An ultra-liberalism in a historic

religion like Christianity has always this danger—that it advance so far from its base as to be cut off from supplies, and spiritually starved into surrender to the world. If it is not then exterminated it is interned in a region ruled entirely by the laws of the foreign country. Gradually it accommodates itself to the new population, and is slowly absorbed so as to forget the first principles of Christ." Some preachers and churches are already interned and the deadly process of absorption is going on. Fortunately, there is a healthful, positive reaction against such and a deploying of the faithful reserves who believe that Christ is central to a glorious God and that the development of the race is to flow from its reconciliation, redemption, and sanctification by Christ.

"At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess Him King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call Him
Lord,
Who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

At His voice creation sprang at once to sight,
All the Angel faces, all the Hosts of light,
Thrones and Dominions, stars upon their way,
All the heavenly Orders, in their great array.

Humbled for a season, to receive a Name,
From the lips of sinners unto whom He came,
Faithfully He bore it spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious, when from death
He pass'd;

Bore it up triumphant with its human light
Through all ranks of creatures, to the central
height;

To the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast;
Fill'd it with the glory of that perfect rest.

Name Him, brothers, name Him, with love strong as death,
But with awe and wonder, and with bated breath;
He is God the Saviour, He is Christ the Lord,
Ever to be worship'd, trusted, and adored.

In your hearts enthrone Him; there let Him subdue
All that is not holy, and that is not true;
Crown Him as your Captain in temptation's hour;
Let His will enfold you in its light and power.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus shall return again,
With His Father's glory, with His Angel train;
For all wreaths of empire meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him King of glory now."

4. Neglect of practical Christianity. Prate as they will about social service and pragmatism, modern gnostics are not as efficient in the kingdom as the dogmatists. Men without deep convictions on the vitality of the gospel have no permanent, pungent power in kingdom enterprises. Liberalism inevitably chills spiritual ardor. It theorizes and tells how things ought to be, but is wanting in the wisdom and energy to effect practical improvements.

One result of the liberal tendency in Colosse was to "slow down" the preacher. Epaphras, seriously alarmed, hurried away to Rome to consult Paul. Archippus remained as pastor. The cold intellectualism affected him as malaria does physical vigor. His zeal abated, his energy relaxed, his service became perfunctory. He needed to be stirred up. Paul aimed at his conscience through his con-

gregation. A sidelight on those simple apostolic days before "lordship over God's heritage" was the program of the pastorate and an appeal to the pastor through the people was easy: "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it." (1) The ministry is not a work which a man takes upon himself. "The ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus" was Paul's conception of his high calling. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will thrust forth laborers into his harvest," was Jesus' prescription for a dearth of preachers. (2) It is a work which requires complete dedication. "Give thyself wholly to it," was Paul's charge to a young preacher. Archippus should discharge carefully the duties devolving upon him. More preachers fail on account of laziness and lack of consecration than fail for want of ability. (3) It is a work no detail and duty of which should be ignored. Compare Acts 20:28; I Timothy 4:16 for the comprehensiveness of the duties. "Take heed" to *himself,* his *teaching,* his *hearers.* (4) It is a work which should be magnified. "Fill it full." "I magnify mine office." The preacher who actually does this will be esteemed and trusted by his people and honored by his Lord. "If any man serve me him will my Father honor."

" 'Tis not a cause of small import
The preacher's care demands;
But what might fill an angel's heart
And fill the Saviour's hands."

"Like people like priests" is the converse truth of the proverb "like priests like people." The thought is that the preacher is shaped by his environment. Doubtless Archippus was influenced by

the growing formalism in Colosse, for a few years before he was a brave and valiant "fellow-soldier" of Paul. A minor prophet said: "He shall receive of you his standing." The preacher's influence and usefulness in the community are, to a very high degree, in the keeping of his people. They make or mar him. I once thought General Lee made the army of Virginia. My views have somewhat changed. Not about General Lee. I believe him to be the highest type of uninspired Christian manhood in the annals of the race. But about the inspiring effect of his army over him. They did as much to immortalize him as he did to mold them. Their unquestioning obedience, their unwavering loyalty, their unfaltering courage, their unswerving devotion from Mechanicsville to Appomattox evoked the noblest in their commander and raised him to a pedestal a little higher than any other commander of history. He was as fortunate in the army he led as were they in the general who led them.

Among the every-day duties which the Colossians neglected and about which they needed to be exhorted were: (1) The putting to death of the carnal nature from the new motive and in the power of the new life in Christ. (2) The putting on, as a garment, of the Christlike qualities of tender-heartedness, kindness, humility, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness and over all these, as an enveloping robe, love which is the perfect bond of union. (3) The assiduous study and abundant appropriation of the gospel, both in information and precept, so that its power in their lives would be manifest by their eminent wisdom. (4) The wise use of religious service so that their psalms, hymns and spiritual songs would instruct and admonish and all be indicative of

the grace of God in their own hearts. (5) The observance of Christian principles in the mutual relations of husbands and wives, children and fathers, slaves and masters. (6) Perseverance and watchfulness.

5. A new sample of the saving power of the gospel. A converted sinner is the strongest argument for Christianity. The conversion of Saul, with all its implications, would, in itself, prove the claims of the four Gospels. As Christ's resurrection declared His deity with power, Paul's conversion confirmed both His resurrection and deity. That conversion is an adequate explanation of the history from the year forty to the year sixty-five, the dates, respectively, of His change and His death. The fact is, Paul used his conversion as a sample of God's grace with the deduction that if God could save him, the worst sinner in all the tides of time, no other sinner need despair. Such is manifestly his meaning to Timothy. "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. But for this cause I obtained mercy that in me as chief Christ Jesus might show forth all His long-suffering for an example to those about to believe on Him to eternal life."

A sample of saving grace was exhibited to the Colossians in the case of Onesimus. This man was Philemon's slave in Colosse. He stole from his master and ran away to Rome. He went with the crowds to hear Paul in the rented house and was converted to Christ. He confided to Paul the wrong he had done his master and was sent back to Philemon with Paul's personally-written guarantee of his indebtedness. How vivid is the whole incident! We

see, as if it were occurring before our very eyes, Onesimus' moral and social degradation, awakened conscience, spiritual regeneration, fruits of repentance, and resolute obedience to right, at the risk of heavy personal sacrifice. Oh, you heretics, reveling in nebulous theories, the answer to your false philosophy is this—a sunken slave saved by the death of Christ who died the death of a slave upon the cross! This is the fruit of our gospel. What have you to match it? Oh, you lukewarm church members, devoid of a passion for service, though chained to a guard, this is my employment—winning converts to Jesus from your own absconding fugitives! Are you not rebuked by the contrast? Oh, you untrustworthy slaves rendering unwilling eye service, you repressive masters, forgetting you have a Master in heaven, here is an exhibit of grace in the heart of a slave that prompts him to return and remain an honest and faithful slave and evokes in the heart of a Christian master the spirit that will prevent him from holding his fellow Christian as a slave! This is my method of manumission! Oh, you lost men, slaves to base passions, running away from a just and merciful God, involved in debts you are unable to pay, here is a model conversion, a deliverance from sin and servitude and restoration to loving favor! "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," not to depart, but to abide in the house forever as sons and heirs of God in Christ.

"Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tones of moralists, who boast,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,

They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song:
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to Divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And He, by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, over-powering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love."

6. An equitable, judicious and righteous adjustment of a perplexing financial, social and political issue. The statesmanship of Paul was nowhere more eminent than in his wise and masterly manner of dealing with the question of slavery, especially this acute case from Colosse. Now, slavery was universal among the ancients. Governments recognized its legality. Philosophers approved its justice. The New Testament churches were all constituted in an age and empire when and where the régime of slavery was recognized by law and endorsed by philosophy. Nothing more severely tested the practicability of the gospel than the existence of the institution of slavery. Had the religious movement become a political movement, the Roman government would have crushed it to extinction. Rivers of blood would have flowed and with the flow Christianity would have gone into the ocean of oblivion. But the gospel was free from the spirit of political revolution. Neither Jesus nor His apostle raised a hand to strike the evil civil government. Their attitude was that of entire political submission and deep spiritual hostility. They never forbade slavery;

they subverted the principle and undermined the institution by peacefully modifying the passions of men and implanting a spirit of Christian liberty, equality, fraternity.

A little letter to a Colossian Christian, the shortest of Paul's writings, is a thesaurus on slavery. Universal application of the principles in that epistle would have abolished human slavery without the loss of a dollar, or the estrangement of races, or the shedding of a drop of blood.

(1) Property rights are inviolate. Primitive Christianity called all adherents to a surrender of life and to the acknowledgment of trusteeship as between man and God; but it never condemned the right of property as between man and man and left the individual free to decide what proportion of his property should be disposed of and given away in the discharge of his duties as trustee. Philemon was the possessor of much property. He was commended for his hospitality and philanthropy, and encouraged in generosity, but he was not told to socialize his holdings. Onesimus was directed to go back to his owner and leave Philemon to decide whether or not he would free him.

(2) Equality is in Christ alone. A gulf separated men everywhere into two classes—bond and free. Society could not bridge that gulf. Government could not. Only Christ could. A converted fugitive slave was no longer a slave to Paul, but a brother peculiarly dear, a part of Paul himself, useful to Paul and Philemon. The gospel changed Onesimus into something better than a slave, into one to be welcomed by his master as a servant and fellow-Christian and received as if he were the apostle himself.

The Lord's Supper in the New Testament churches continually kept before their minds their equality in Christ. Around the table of the Lord master and slave gathered and partook of bread and wine in remembrance of their Saviour, who was crucified as a criminal and slave and who had accompanied the institution of this recurrent rite by performing the servile office of washing His disciples' feet. That is the only table where two classes, so widely apart socially, have ever met or can ever meet on an equality.

Slavery was not of the South's seeking. From 1619 to 1772 Virginia passed thirty-three legislative acts, ranging from graduated taxes to discriminatory laws, designed to discourage slavery where the colony had not the authority to prohibit the importation of slaves. The king, in council, vetoed all these acts. Finally, free to exercise her own choice, Virginia, in 1778, enacted that "no slave or slaves shall hereafter be imported into this commonwealth by sea or land, nor shall any slaves so imported be sold or bought by any person whatsoever." Unbiased historians of the future will chronicle the true story of the origin and practice of slavery in the United States.

Our nation has a heritage of woe from the bungling and blundering Abolitionists. Misguided enthusiasts, were they, aggravating a question which would have settled itself. General Lee said in 1856: "While we see the course of the final abolition of slavery is onward, and we give it the aid of our prayers and all justifiable means in our power, we must leave the progress as well as the result in His hands, who sees the end and chooses to work by slow influences." The harshness of Southern slave-

holders was greatly exaggerated. To the extent to which severity did exist, it was not palliated by the Scriptures, but was contrary to Paul's advice to Philemon. When the anti-slave states harbored run-away slaves from the South they violated the principle laid down by Paul in returning Onesimus to his master. Dred Scott, a negro slave in Missouri, sued his master, John F. A. Sanford, for his freedom. The Circuit Court of St. Louis rendered a verdict and judgment in his favor. The Supreme Court of the State reversed the judgment and remanded the case to the Circuit Court. The case went to the Supreme Court of the United States on exceptions to the court's instruction. After being twice argued, Chief Justice Taney delivered the opinion of the court, one of the longest and ablest on record. He reversed the judgment of the Circuit Court and remanded the case for a new trial. For that decision, which was clearly a correct interpretation of the constitution, the chief justice was hounded, denounced, slandered, and vilified. "The Unjust Judge!" cried the Abolitionist, of one who had liberated his own slaves long before the war.

John Brown's fanatical raid and base murders added fuel to the flames. Abolitionist orators fanned the flames by applauding and heroizing John Brown. The nation was plunged into war. Constitutional rights of States and individuals were violated; coercion was invoked; force was substituted for reason; the nation was torn with fratricidal strife; hasty and ill-advised amendments were added to the constitution; wounds were left which time is now healing; but a chasm was opened between two races which seems to yawn wider with the passing years. The bad feeling between the sections is almost gone,

but in its stead has come a more deplorable feeling between the two races, both in the South and North. The most sagacious fear what the end may be. Dreadful apprehension drives sleep from the pillow of many a thoughtful Southerner. Northerners, too, are awaking with alarm. A fire was kindled by reckless hands which a half a century has been unable to extinguish. Unless the waters of God's providence and grace quench the raging flames of race animosity, then God show mercy to us and to our descendants!

All this came about because radicals were unwilling to trust the leaven of the gospel to permeate and purify our economic life. That leaven was working. George Washington, George Wythe, John Randolph, William H. Fitzhugh, Robert E. Lee, and hundreds of others voluntarily emancipated their slaves. To say the South fought to maintain slavery is to display prejudiced and superficial thinking. Slavery was an incident. The South fought for her rights under the constitution. The census of Virginia in 1860 shows a white population of 1,047,299, and only 52,128 men, women, and children who were slave-holders and one-third of these owned only one or two slaves. Neither Joseph E. Johnston, A. P. Hill, nor Fitzhugh Lee, all gallant Confederate officers, ever owned a slave. J. E. B. Stuart owned no slave for some time prior to the war. "Stonewall" Jackson owned only two slaves, both of whom he purchased upon their solicitation. Forthwith, he granted them the privilege of earning their freedom by devoting their wages, which he paid them, to reimbursing him for the purchase price. The man accepted the offer and earned his freedom. The woman preferred to remain a servant in the Jack-

son family. Not one soldier in thirty in the "Stonewall Brigade" ever owned or expected to own a slave. The statesmanship of Paul in the North would have prevented war, preserved the union, and finally freed the slaves. The motive which induced the Quakers to liberate their slaves and to be the first consistently to labor for abolition in England and the United States would have accomplished emancipation in the South without the shedding of blood and the destruction of property.

As surely as Philemon voluntarily freed Onesimus, the principles of Christianity would have peaceably freed the slaves of the South. As Christian brotherhood followed Onesimus' freedom, fraternal bonds would bind the two races which stand

> "Aloof, the scars remaining—
> Like cliffs which had been rent asunder:
> A dreary sea now flows between."

We were not Christians enough to settle the slavery question without war. Are we Christians enough to build a brotherhood out of the wreckage, suspicion, distrust, alienations, and strife of the years since the war? The problem is more complex than slavery. One race cannot work it out alone. The task demands coöperation, a mutual desire of the stronger to help and of the weaker to be helped. It requires a firm faith in the adequacy of the gospel for all conditions, a determination to do right at all hazards, a poise to be unbalanced by no circumstances, a readiness to profit by the lessons of the past.

> "Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
> Lest we forget, lest we forget."

CHAPTER VII

PHILIPPI—THE JOYFUL CHURCH

We are on historic ground at Philippi. The feet of Philip of Macedon, Alexander the Great, and Aristotle, the philosopher, walked its streets. A memorable and decisive battle was fought there in 42 B.C. The assassination of Julius Cæsar in the senate-house (March 15, 44) at the age of fifty-six did not restore the old government of the senate as the conspirators hoped it would. After several indecisive battles the second triumvirate was formed. The world was divided into three parts. Octavius (Augustus), the grand-nephew of Julius Cæsar, was to govern the West; Mark Antony, secretary of Cæsar, was to govern the East; and Lepidus, one of Cæsar's old lieutenants, was to govern Africa. Days like the reign of Lenine and Trotsky in Bolshevik Russia ensued. The estates of the wealthy were confiscated. Three hundred senators and two thousand knights were murdered. Cicero, at the age of sixty-four, was among the victims.

The friends of the old republic rallied in the East. Led by Brutus and Cassius, they met the forces of Octavius and Antony on the field of Philippi. In two successive engagements the new levies of the liberators were cut to pieces. In the first battle Cassius committed suicide; in the second Brutus did the same; and with them died the hope of a restoration of the republic. Legend tells how one night a specter appeared to Brutus and seemed to say, "I

am the evil genius; we will meet again at Philippi." This has passed into a proverb. "I will meet you at Philippi" means one will see and settle with another in a decisive contest.

Roman material power was founded upon two pillars, roads and colonies. Philippi derived an importance from both. She was on the national highway between the Balkan Mountains and the Aegean Sea. Neapolis was the seaport corresponding to Selucia for Antioch, the Sacred Port for Ephesus, Cenchrea for Corinth, and Piraeus for Athens. The armies and the trade went over that road.

Philippi was also a colony. A knowledge of Roman law and government is essential to appreciate the status of a colony. The colony was a development. The evolution may be described briefly. The struggle between the patricians and plebeians taught the Romans "political wisdom." Romans became fit to govern the world by giving way when they had to, and by adapting themselves wisely and slowly to changed conditions. Rome was never in a hurry to govern the countries she conquered and she was the first successful ruler of subject peoples.

Macedonia was made a Roman province in 148 B.C. Magistrates were sent annually by the senate to govern the provinces. The people were everywhere oppressed. The Gracchi, Tiberius and Caius, made several abortive efforts to eradicate the evils which afflicted the State. The provinces were looked upon as estates of the Roman nobles with which they made as much money as they could. It remained for Augustus (Octavius) to rearrange the scheme of government and to elevate the provinces to an equality with Italy. Rome was no longer the mistress of all the conquered peoples. She was only their capital

city. Men were no longer subjects ruled for selfish gain, but citizens ruled for their own good.

"Lo, Rome! Imperial Rome alone is she
Who conquered foemen to her bosom took,
And cherished mankind with her queenly name—
No mistress she, but mother dear of all—
And children called them all, in holy bonds
Of kinship linking nations far and near."

This statesmanlike course with the provinces was pursued with the colonies. A colony is a settlement made in a foreign country. A Roman colony was a miniature Rome. Augustus constituted Philippi a colony. As such, she enjoyed the protection of Roman law and her citizens were the equals of the citizens of Rome. The voting place was Rome and of course they could not go to the voting place often, if ever. Still, it was their right to vote at the one voting place for all citizens. They could understand the metaphor: "Our citizenship is in heaven." We live on earth, but our names are enrolled in heaven. We are citizens of heaven in the three ways by which persons obtained Roman citizenship. By birth, we are free born in the second birth. By gift, "it is the gift of God." By purchase, "redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."

We enjoy exalted privileges as citizens. (1) Enrolment on heaven's register. (2) A voice in the election of the earthly representatives of the heavenly commonwealth. (3) Eligibility for the highest honors. (4) Immunity from the fear that hath torment. (5) Security of soul—all the resources and powers of the emperor and commonwealth are

pledged to our preservation and safety. (6) The blessed assurance, not that we *shall* be but *now* are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." (7) The right of personal access to the emperor.

We are "obligated by the nobility" of this citizenship. (1) To be animated by spiritual motives and not to "mind earthly things." (2) To do common every-day tasks in an uncommon way. (3) To wear the badge of heavenly citizenship, holiness. (4) To subordinate private interests to kingdom interests. (5) To labor to extend the bounds of the Divine Kingdom. (6) To obey cheerfully its laws and delight to learn more of its principles until God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. (7) To give unswerving allegiance to our "King eternal, immortal, invisible."

Two chief magistrates for the colony were appointed by the emperor, or senate, and were independent of the provincial governors. Remembering the colonial character of Philippi adds vividness to Luke's narrative in Acts 16.

One more historical comment. Philippi was "a chief city of the district." It was the most important city, commercially, politically, and historically, in Macedonia. See how Paul conducts his campaign by establishing Christian centers in the cities—Antioch, Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome. There was wise strategy in his course.

The beginnings of Christianity in Europe were quite simple. The account is in minute detail. A single verse summarizes Galatia which, we judge, was evangelized at this time. The historian hurries on to the evangelization of Europe. His pen moves slowly and no item of importance is unmen-

tioned. Twice the Holy Spirit forbids further preaching in Asia. Paul follows Him as the Israelites in the wilderness followed the pillar of cloud and fire. He is as sensitive to the Spirit's impressions as the compass is to the earth's magnetic axis. He is unerringly guided to the Dardanelles. On the far-famed fields of Troy, immortalized in Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid, Paul sees, in a vision, a man in white on the Macedonian shore beseeching him: "Come over into Macedonia and help us." It is Europe's cry for the gospel.

Do you understand the import of that vision? Athens with gods innumerable, Philippi with crime licensed, Corinth with pleasure enthroned, all stand up in the figure of a *man appealing* for help. Do you catch the plaintiveness of that appeal? Dionysius and Damaris, dissatisfied with the philosophy of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; Lydia longing for a glory more enduring than her purple; the wretched girl the victim of a system she loathed, and from which she wished to be free; Jews looking for the consolation of Israel with God-fearing Greeks and women of high station in Thessalonica; all these mingle their needs in one piercing, heart-breaking cry which sounded across the Hellespont.

Paul was always obedient to the heavenly vision. Straightway he sailed for Europe. Silas was with him from Antioch. Timothy joined them at Lystra, and Luke at Troy. This is the first appearance of Luke in the record. Illustrious Luke: (1) Paul's most scholarly convert. (2) Distinguished as physician, poet, preacher. (3) Renowned as philologist, geographer, historian. (4) Noted as the only Gentile author of a Bible book. Beloved Luke: (1) Concealed by his modesty from the pages of his

gospel and acts, but trusted and praised among all the churches. (2) Twenty years the personal physician of the afflicted apostle and sharer of four of his imprisonments. (3) The one of all Paul's friends never to forsake him. (4) All in all, Paul's best and most useful friend.

The four missionaries crossed from the Orient to the Occident to proclaim the good news. Xerxes' crossing the Hellespont to conquer Greece; Hannibal's scaling the Alps to conquer Italy; Cæsar's crossing the Rubicon to defend the tribunes of the people against the senate, were not so momentous events in human history as Paul's crossing the Hellespont with the gospel. Imagine the difference had the vision called him eastward! India and China would walk in the gospel light which shines on England and America. England and America would sit in the shadow of the night which hangs like a pall over India and China.

A little more than a mile west of Philippi flows the river Gangas. Thither Paul and his co-adjutors wended their way on Saturday morning. Judaism was too feeble to own a synagogue in Philippi. The men had lost faith and discontinued worship. The women, always the last to forsake a cause or a friend, maintained worship in a cheap prayer house out by the river. Paul sat down and preached to those women. In the group was Lydia, a business woman from Thyatira in Asia-Minor and a proselyte. The splendid jobbing market in Philippi accounts for her presence in the city. She and her servants had come to buy goods for her mercantile business in Thyatira. Grace operated on the heart of this competent and successful, sincere and reverent, woman and she was saved.

What is salvation? It is that divine act by which God, through the merits of Christ's atoning death, saves from the guilt, penalty and power of sin, whoever repents of his sin and believes on the Christ. The import of the plan is that God is in the right, and man is in the wrong; that man has transgressed against God without cause and is justly exposed to everlasting punishment; that the due honor of God's person and the moral order of His universe require the punishment of sin; that mercy, originating purely in God, provided a way through the sacrifice of Christ for the sinner to receive pardon and peace consistently with the perfections of God's nature; and that any sinner, whatever he has done, may have that salvation upon the terms of turning from his sin and accepting the Saviour.

What is a Christian? A Christian is one who has personally appropriated this salvation and is seeking to express in daily life all its principles and implications. Stated in another way: Whoever accepts Jesus as his Saviour and submits to Him as his Lord and takes the New Testament as the law of his life, is a Christian.

Who saved Lydia? Was it Paul? Luke does not say so. A preacher was met on the street by a man under the influence of liquor. "Say, preacher, don't you know me? I am one of your converts." "You must be," rejoined the preacher, "for I am satisfied the Lord never converted you." Paul and his preaching were the instruments through which God saved Lydia. The record removes all doubt. The preaching of Paul would have availed nothing had not the Lord opened Lydia's heart. She was saved not so much by embracing a new faith as by experiencing a new creation. Professor Stifler illustrates

the human and divine elements in conversion by photography. The photographer arranges his plate and adjusts it to the object to be pictured. He can have no picture until he gains the sun's rays. When he takes a picture it is rightly called a photograph. The light made it, not the photographer.

Paul can adjust the gospel and bring his hearer before the truth but there is no conversion until the Holy Spirit acts upon his heart. Every saved soul is a photograph made by the divine light shining upon the heart that looks into the word of truth. "But as many as received him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, to them that believe on His name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12f). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit" (John 3:6). I planted, Apollos watered; but God made it grow" (I Cor. 3:6). "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). Salvation is primarily and preëminently God's work. This fact is made very clear in the first conversion in Europe. A sample was given of all conversions that were to follow.

What is the first duty of a saved sinner? Lydia's next step answers that question. She was baptized and all her believing servants. (On the baptism of Lydia's household and the jailer see "The People Called Baptists," page 53.) Hospitality was a grace of Christianity. Matthew served a sumptuous banquet to his newly found Master and made it an occasion to introduce his old associates to Jesus. The new converts at Pentecost partook of food with gladness and singleness of heart and shared their provisions with bountiful hospitality. Peter violated

long established and rigid religious and social customs to accept the hospitality of Cornelius. The jailer brought the preachers into his home after his baptism and set meat before them. Lydia invited the missionaries to make her home their home and would take no excuse. Her constraint provided shelter and food for God's four messengers.

It is to be feared that we are losing this charming grace of hospitality. Hotels, the servant problem, the high cost of food, all militate against apostolic and old time southern hospitality. Once, there was a "prophet's chamber" in the well regulated Christian home. Now, the plans for new houses seldom provide for such. Once, the Gaiuses were numerous in cities, towns, and country and they entertained and sent forward on their journey worthily the men of God. Now, the churches send the visiting preacher to the hotel; or leave him to find his own entertainment. In extenuation, it may truly be said that domestic conditions have changed. Grant all that: yet we shall be infinitely poorer in fellowship and grace when hospitality is dead. "Do not forget hospitality; for thereby some entertained angels unawares." Compare Gen. 18-19; Judges 13; Luke 24:28-30.

The first event in Philippi was the conversion of a woman. The second was the rescue of a maiden. A girl who was a sorceress, a fortune-teller, was owned by a syndicate of avaricious and unscrupulous men who profited on her Spirit of divination. This girl followed after the missionaries as they went to worship and annoyed them. Paul was thoroughly worn out by her. He pitied her and disregarded her owners, who thought gain was more important than a girl. Her soul was more valuable

in Paul's estimation than a big business. On the very spot where Perseus delivered Andromeda from the dragon, and where the knights of chivalry rode in the tournaments to crown their fair lady, Paul and Silas rescued a girl whom mythology and chivalry would have despised.

In the name of Jesus Christ, by which Peter healed the 40-year-old cripple, Paul evicted the evil Spirit of the Pythian Apollo which possessed her. Her masters, bereft of their illicit gain, were furious. Violent hands were laid on Paul and Silas and they were dragged into the market-place. False charges were trumped up under the guise of patriotism. A mob was incited to rage. The magistrates lost their dignity, forgot the duties of their office, violated their oath, broke their own law, snatched the clothes from the preachers and commanded the lictors to beat uncondemned Roman citizens and cast them into prison. Profit was preferred to purity, Barabbas to Christ, Mammon to God. Such was the moral standard in a city wherein were combined all the advantages of Greek culture and Roman law.

That demoniacal girl and her owners represent the power of Satan. Paul's conflict with them at the inauguration of Christianity in Europe is typical. Satan is jealous of God and always tries to destroy His work at the beginning. In the morning of the race Satan whispered distrust into the ears of our first parents and beguiled them into disobedience. He put murder into the heart of one of the two first worshipers. He went up with the sons of God to the first place of public worship and impugned the motives of the best man of those ancient times. He slew the babes of Bethlehem, attempting to kill Christianity in its cradle. He assailed Jesus

in the mountain at the entrance of His public career. He cried out in the synagogue at Capernaum when Jesus began His ministry there. He sought to buy the Spirit of God with money when the gospel spread to Samaria. He withstood the missionaries when the gospel was planted in Cyprus. He resisted stubbornly and fought fiercely the establishing of Christianity in Europe. His agents were an unfortunate girl, a vested interest, the civil government, and a mad mob. His methods were slander, beating, imprisonment, and bolshevism.

How unreasoning is a mob! The wild waves of the tempest tossed sea are not more boisterous and uncontrollable. At such times Shakespeare's words apply:

"O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason!"

Paul was in frequent danger from the mob. Its venom first broke upon him at Antioch-in-Pisidia and was oft repeated until he was delivered the last time by Claudius Lysias in Jerusalem. Mob psychology is dangerous. Orderly processes and constitutional rights are swept away. Injustices are perpetrated. Justice is not vindicated. Crime is not deterred. The innocent are not protected. The whole moral tone of a community is affected injuriously. A generation will pass before the evil effects are overcome. No Christian can countenance mob law, which is no law.

Paul has been beaten before. This time it is not with Jewish stripes but Roman rods. Perhaps young Timothy's soul was knit to Paul's as he looked down on his pale and bleeding face at Lystra and

felt a hero worship for the man who had courage so to suffer for his convictions. This is Paul's first experience in prison. It will not be his last. Silas is his fellow-prisoner and sufferer. In a dark, unventilated, loathsome prison the two preachers, with bleeding backs and feet in the stocks, waited for the dawn. They passed the heavy hours in singing. A religion worthwhile sings in the dark. As the Baptist preachers, Waller, Craig, Childs, and others, were led through the streets of Fredericksburg, Virginia, for the first imprisonment, June 1768, to the jail they sang:

> "Broad is the road that leads to death
> And thousands walk together there,
> But wisdom shows a better way
> With here and there a traveler."

They were the successors of Paul and Silas. So was John Weatherford in Chesterfield jail. The jailer, a rather kind hearted man, allowed the prisoner the privilege of the corridors. Persecutors complained to the judge. I have seen the original court record, with another entry a few pages after the commitment, ordering the sheriff to confine "said Weatherford strictly to his cell." His Spirit was not bound. He preached to the rabble through the outer bars. They cut his hands with whips and knives. He sprinkled his blood on them in impressive and appealing gestures.

A century passed. Dr. Hatcher was gathering funds for Richmond College. He visited a country church. The pastor said: "Dr. Hatcher, I want my people to do nobly but fear they will not. Our richest member is our stingiest member. Ten dol-

lars is his maximum contribution to any object. Our members are kept from doing their full duty by waiting for him to lead." It is a terrible responsibility to be the wealthiest member of a church. Dr. Hatcher rehearsed the struggle of Virginia Baptists for religious freedom. He told the story of John Weatherford and called for subscriptions as only he could. The rich man arose and began to speak, "Dr. Hatcher, when I was a small boy my father took me to the funeral of Parson Weatherford at a country burying ground in Pittsylvania. As was the custom in those days and at that place the people passed by the open casket and viewed the remains. I was too small to look in the casket and my father lifted me up so I could see. Parson Weatherford's hands were folded across his pulseless bosom. They were scarred with white marks. Those white marks were stamped indelibly upon my young mind. I have thought about them a thousand times and wondered what caused them. You have explained it tonight. I will give five hundred dollars to endow the college of a denomination which produces men like Parson Weatherford."

John Ireland had the spirit of Paul and Silas. When in the jail at Culpeper courthouse, where his death was attempted by the explosion of gunpowder, the burning of brimstone, and the use of poison, he began his letters, "From My Palace in Culpeper." Lovelace fathomed the secret of these men in "To Althea":

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for a hermitage."

At midnight, the prisoners were singing and praying. The earth trembled. It trembled in Jerusalem when the company of believers prayed. Acts 4:31. It was an earthquake and more. The doors were opened, the chains unfettered. How is it to be explained? A coincidence? No, it is explained as Victor Hugo explained Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. God! The same God who locked the jaws of lions and Daniel felt no harm; who quenched the violence of flames and the three young Hebrews were unsinged; who delivered Joseph from the envy of his brothers, the malice of Potiphar's wife, and the confinement of Pharaoh's prison; who struck the chains from Peter's hands and led him by the first and second watch and through the iron gate which opened of its own accord; that same God intervened in behalf of His servants and Christ won the first decisive battle with paganism.

Mercy accompanied judgment. The jailer was on the verge of committing suicide. It was Roman philosophy—the religion of suicide to end trouble and avoid disgrace. Yonder in Pangeus, to the south, ninety-five years before Cassius was slain at his own command by the hand of a comrade. Yonder on the slopes to the north, two days later, Brutus died the same way. The jailer would do likewise. The sword point touched his breast when mercy intervened, spared his life and saved his soul. Suicide is the religion of despair. There are only two suicides in the Bible, King Saul in the Old and Judas Iscariot in the New. Human life is sacred. The Sixth commandment says, "Thou shalt not kill." Suicide is worse than being murdered. One may be murdered. One has no right to take his own life. No Christian does when in his right mind. "Do

thyself no harm." You are a member of a family and of human society. When you harm yourself you wrong them. This is elemental ethics.

"To thine own self be true
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

The frightened jailer was sin-smitten, conscience-stricken. Hastily procuring lights and entering the prison, he led the preachers out and asked the most momentous question ever propounded to a preacher: "What must I do to be saved?" It is the only place in the Scriptures where that question is asked in so many words. It was asked by one deeply conscious of his lost condition and earnestly desirous to be saved. If there is an explicit answer to this definite question surely it will be given in unmistakable terms. Paul and Silas did not say: (1) Be baptized. (2) Partake of the Lord's Supper. (3) Join the church. (4) Sell your property and give to the poor. (5) Keep the moral law. (6) Do penance. (7) Confess to us as Peter's representatives. (8) Reform the prison. (9) Bind the wounds of the bleeding. (10) Do justly by the oppressed.

They did say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." The jailer addressed the preachers as Lords, "Sirs." They answered, there is but one "Lord" and He is Jesus. Believe on Him, confide in Him, rely on Him, obey Him. Know Him as the man Jesus who shares your nature, as the Lord who rules the conscience. He saved devout men at Pentecost, upright men in Cæsarea, Greeks in Antioch, a proselyte woman in your own city. He can save you, the representative of statesmanship,

officialdom, criminology. We are convicts but have Christ and we can instruct you, our custodian, who have Cæsar. We speak to you and all your house the Word of the Lord. Believe understandingly and you are saved. The man was saved that very hour and all his house.

Salvation is not a process; it is an act. The moment when the animal man becomes spiritual is the moment of regeneration. To those outstanding sinners like the jailer, this is a definite and indelible experience; to some under religious influences from childhood, like young Timothy, it may take place almost imperceptibly and unconsciously. It is not so important to know when as it is to know whether that spiritual change has taken place. Baptism was administered somewhere between the jail and the house. Joy and hospitality succeeded fear and maltreatment.

Day dawns. The magistrates have enough of these prisoners. They, too, heard the earthquake and are alarmed. They order them released and let go from the city. God's providence, not the aegis of Roman citizenship, had preserved the prisoners and struck terror to their persecutors. But now, Paul asserts his rights, privileges, and immunities as a citizen. He will leave no pretext for the slander that he broke jail and was a fugitive. Neither will he neglect the civil rights to which he was entitled. He will stand on the guarantees of a free-born Roman citizen. He does so a second time on his last visit to Jerusalem (Acts 22:25-28). Twice his Master appealed to the law (John 10:34; 18:23). Paul will be protected by the Recorder's tactful speech in Ephesus in which the orderly processes of Roman law were insisted upon. He will finally appeal his case to Cæsar. By

invoking the Habeas Corpus Act, and this was its first use in history, he created an embarrassing predicament for the magistrates. They assume the attitude of suppliants before their prisoners. But Paul has no vengeance. He will bring no charge of false imprisonment. He has suffered illegally but he is vindicated. The preacher will not be prosecutor. He has something more important to do. He visits the house of Lydia, exhorts the brethren there, and departs for other fields of endeavor.

We have dwelt, somewhat in detail, on Luke's minute account of the establishment of the cause in Philippi. Combine with this Paul's letter to the Philippians and we have several striking features in that church.

1. Prominence of women. Macedonian women generally held an exceptionally honored position. The inscriptions commonly record the mother's instead of the father's name. Too much importance is not to be attached to epitaphs; but it is true that Macedonian husbands excelled in the terms of endearment carved as epitaphs to their deceased wives. Add to this the dignity which Christ conferred upon women and you have the New Testament church in which women ranked highest.

This church began in a woman's prayer meeting. Its first member was a business woman. She carried the gospel to her home in Thyatira and started one of the seven churches of Asia. Sisters Euodia and Syntyche were influential members. They developed considerable feeling over something and were exhorted to forget their differences and become reconciled in Christ.

Jesus was woman's best friend. This is admitted. Paul's attitude towards women is friendly, though

I suppose he is more misunderstood in this respect than in any other. He credited Eunice and Lois with the superb training of his co-laborer Timothy. He entrusted Phoebe with a difficult mission to Rome. He admired and praised Priscilla, and never mentioned her husband without her. He chose as his host in Cæsarea a father whose four daughters prophesied. Bernice, the queen, attended his trial before Agrippa. He prefigured the gospel's work among and for women in the conversion of Lydia and in the dispossession of the girl. Wherever the Christianity he propagated has prevailed woman has been elevated. Compare woman's state in Europe and America with her state in the lands of Islam, Buddha, Confucius. He recognized woman as man's equal in Christ.

These words are written August 19, 1920, the day after the Legislature of Tennessee ratified the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and added the thirty-sixth state and completed the necessary three-fourths for national woman's suffrage. (Connecticut afterwards ratified.) There never was any real argument against the *justice* of suffrage. Nor could it be truthfully said that women are not as intelligent as men. It was a long struggle. Sixty-six years ago Susan B. Anthony began her agitation for sex equality before the law. Forty-two years ago the amendment, now adopted just as she wrote it, was offered to a Congress that would not even consider it. The amendment forces suffrage upon the States which did not ratify. It says, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or by any state on account of sex." On the basis of the 1910 census the women of voting

age preponderated in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the two Carolinas and numbered only 2,794,124 fewer than the men in the forty-eight states. A great victory has been won and opponents should acquiesce gracefully.

The long drawn out battle tested the mettle of the women and helped to prepare them for the intelligent exercise of the franchise. The best of them, suffragettes and antis, must qualify and vote lest the less intelligent or less moral make politics worse than before women had the ballot. The right to vote imposes a duty to vote intelligently. The women must never forget that but for Christianity they had not received this recognition of their rights. Suffrage will not bring the political millennium. Women must be counseled by Paul's admonition to quietness, modesty, and abstinence from party-spirit and personal spite. Women are prone to take differences of opinion on public issues as personal issues. They must learn that those who disagree with them are not their enemies. Sometimes Paul agreed with them and sometimes he did not. Why should he be maligned for his independent and well matured convictions? Woman's suffrage brings a new, refining element into government. It must not be abused so as to weaken the foundation of the home, which is built mostly on woman's love and care, or to lessen woman's activities in the churches of Christ which have been their best benefactors. Woman's usefulness in the homes and churches is unrivaled; her service there is indispensable.

Much remains to be done for woman. The sisters of the Philippian girl walk the streets of modern cities as she did of old. Notwithstanding wholesome and stringent laws, they are exploited and mal-

treated. This problem is the open sore of city life. The churches dare not leave it unhealed. The balm is more in their possession than in the government's. They should stimulate the preventive measures of parental care and Christian social life to keep the girls from the wrong way. They should go after those who are floating on the swollen, sullen stream which sweeps through the city streets and rescue them. Well may we pause to read the startling handwriting on the wall by Tennyson:

"Is it well that while we range with science glorying the time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?
There, among the gloomy alleys, progress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousands on the street;
There the master scrimps his haggard seamstress of her daily bread,
There a single, sordid attic holds the living and the dead."

2. Abounding joy. A note of joy rings through the letter to this church. Paul thanks God every time he thinks of them. They were the dearest of his churches. To what extent the women were responsible for this happy condition is an interesting question. Probably their influence kept the fountains of joy flowing freely. Christianity should produce happiness. It brings peace with God, good-will towards your fellow men, victory over adversity. It sets the heart right, and happiness is a state of the heart. Robert Burns knew and he said:

"It's no' in titles nor in rank,
It's no' in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest.
If happiness have not her seat
And center in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest."

Outward circumstances, in themselves, can neither give nor destroy happiness. The beatitudes teach that happiness in life depends on character rather than on circumstances. The bishops, deacons and saints of the church at Philippi were in a hostile and depressing atmosphere. Yet, they were joyful. "In much trial and affliction was the abundance of their joy." They learned the habit of happiness from Paul and Silas—men who could sing with bleeding backs and fastened feet in the dampness and darkness of the dungeon. If it be true that all things work together for good to them that love God; that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working out for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; that our chastisement is evidence of our sonship and yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness; that if we suffer we shall also reign with Him; that tribulation works patience; should we not rejoice in afflictions also? "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."

The happy church is the attractive church. We discredit our holy religion by moroseness, despondency. Have we not colored and corrupted it with melancholy? Gloom is out of place on a believer's brow. There is infinitely more religion in a smile than in a frown.

3. Victorious over opposition. The missionaries ran counter to a wicked traffic. They did not side-

step. They faced the foe and defeated him. This was a token of the victories which the churches of Christ should win over licensed, organized and capitalized vice. They have driven the lottery and open saloon out of the United States. They have outlawed white slavery. They will march steadily onward until we have a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The second foe encountered was the civil government. The church at Jerusalem won against religious and Jewish state persecution. Now the Roman power is encountered for the first time. It was a mighty power. Its dominions were bounded on the west by the Atlantic ocean; on the north by the English Channel, the Rhine, the Danube, the Black Sea, and the mountains of Caucasus; on the east by the Armenian mountains, the Tigris and the Arabian desert; and on the south by the African desert. Its Cæsar was worshiped as God. The conflict and outcome in Philippi were indicative of the fortunes of Christianity in the Roman empire and in the western world. Paul was no revolutionist. He tampered not with the system of government. He preached Christ; that was all. He put a new spirit in men. That spirit mastered the jailer, frightened the magistrate, permeated the people, and leavened the empire. His work was distinguished from other reformers and conquerors in that he was not seeking anything for himself, whether position or power, fame or fortune; but he was seeking to give to others, to share with others, to make Christ known to others. He finally lost his life, but he won his cause.

The world never so much needed the unselfish serenity of Paul as to-day. The times are out of joint. Unrest and discontent are everywhere. Bol-

shevism, the tyrannical rule of 600,000 over 160,000,000 has wrecked Russia and threatens other countries. The first outbreak of Bolshevism was in Philippi. It superseded, for a day, constitutional citizenship. Paul supplanted it by calmness when the tumult was raging, by a dignified assertion of the rights of citizenship, by a counter-offense of instruction. The instrument of Bolshevism, the jailer, was won to the truth and Bolshevism collapsed. Faith is the antidote for Bolshevism—intelligent faith in government, sympathetic faith in man, trusting faith in God.

4. Pecuniary liberality. Philippi is a shining example of a giving church. In four respects it is an example: (1) Liberality of the poor. "Their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality." Poor people are proportionately more liberal than rich people. A large giver in the Baptist 75 Million Compaign said: "I give ten thousand and never eat a biscuit less for breakfast. Our poor members give hundreds and scrimp to pay it. Rich people can hardly make a financial sacrifice. The poor make the sacrifices." The poor European brethren gave *beyond* their ability. (2) Unsolicited contributions. They gave of their "own accord." They saw the opportunity and seized it. They anticipated the collection. I know a few such. One is a deacon. You never have to appeal to him. He sends his contribution in advance and always for a larger amount than the pastor would have suggested. May his tribe increase! (3) Insistent liberality. "Beseeching of us the grace and participation in the ministering of the saints." They wanted to be identified with the good work. They besought Paul to permit them to share in his labors;

they thus became sharers in his rewards. That is precisely the point John made with the generous Gaius who entertained, encouraged, and helped on their way the traveling preachers. "We, therefore, ought to sustain such persons, that we may become fellow-workers for the truth." (4) Continuous giving. They kept up their contributions. Gifts were sent to support Paul in other towns and even in distant Rome. Money for charity in Jerusalem and money for missions in Europe kept coming from this church. They took the initiative. "In the beginning of the gospel, when I went forth from Macedonia, no church communicated with me in the way of giving and receiving, but ye only" (Phil. 4:15). They practiced the precedent they set. "In Thessalonica ye sent once and again to my need" (Phil. 4:16).

The Philippian spirit is to be coveted and cultivated by modern churches. We surpass them in wealth, but do not equal them in achievement. We allow our pastors to live on inadequate salaries while we revel in luxuries. We live in ceiled houses and the house of God lies waste. We live six days for self and one day for God. We make pretensions to piety, but show too little zeal.

5. Personal attachments. The Philippians gave themselves to the Lord and to the missionaries. Love and loyalty bound them to the preachers. Coöperation set forward the cause in a great way. Bishops and deacons dwelt in brotherly bonds. The apostle got into trouble. Distance could not weaken the ties that bound them to him. Adversity could not dampen their ardent attachment to him. They sent Epaphroditus all the way to Rome with succor. The things sent were as perfume in a foul atmos-

phere, an acceptable gift and well pleasing to God. Epaphroditus hazarded his life for Paul. His illness in the miasmal climate of Rome pained Paul and pained the church. Nowhere do we find more deft and beautiful touches of the close and intimate relations between brethren than in Philippi. They could sing with the spirit and the understanding:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

We share our mutual woes
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear."

I know a church like Philippi in the tender ties that bind. A former pastor, a veritable Apollos of the pulpit, was broken in health and impoverished in purse in old age. That church refreshed his spirit with affection, provided comforts with generous hand, dissipated the clouds in his evening sky and his sun set in the resplendent glory of the anticipated better life. He preferred the hotel, and there he lived his last years. The best they could provide was his. The end came not unexpectedly. His pastor hurried to the hotel. Four laymen had preceded him. They sat on the bed in the adjoining room; tears flowed from their eyes; emotion choked their throats. They were arranging the funeral. He should have the lot in which he wished to await the resurrection. Every detail of the funeral should be arranged and every expense borne by those to

whom he had ministered in the days of his vigor and health. They laid his body to rest in beautiful Hollywood. A stately monument marks his well-kept grave, while the murmur of the lordly James is his requiem.

CHAPTER VIII

THESSALONICA—THE EXPECTANT CHURCH

Salonika, the base of the allies' operations in Macedonia, and where Venezelos gathered his followers who opposed King Constantine's attitude on Greece's alleged neutrality, is the ancient Thessalonica. It is one of the few of Paul's cities to retain its importance. During the world war it came into a new prominence. Situated at the head of the Aegean Sea on a sloping hill and guarded by mountains on both sides, and being the terminus of the railroad through the Balkans, the allies rightly estimated its superiority to any other base if they were to send a force into Macedonia. Beyond the mountains to the north stretch the fertile plains of the Danube. The famous Ignation road from Rome to Constantinople passes through the city, and it is about midway between the Adriatic and the Hellespont.

The original name of the place was Therma, derived from warm mineral springs in the vicinity. Alexander the Great died at Babylon, 323 B.C., from an overdose of ardent spirits. Believing he was a demigod, he accepted the challenge to drink to its brim the huge cup, Hercules, and paid the price with his life. Though only thirty-two years of age, he had established a world empire, larger than that of Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon, the Czar, or the Kaiser. That empire was divided among his three generals. One of these, Cassandra, married Alexander's sister, Thessalonica, and renamed the

town of Therma, calling it Thessalonica in honor of his wife. It then became a city of size and prestige.

Rome conquered Macedonia 116 B.C. and divided the country into four districts with Thessalonica the capital of one. Later the four districts were combined into one province with Thessalonica as the capital. In 42 B.C. Augustus made it a free city, governed by men of its own selection. They were designated *politarchs,* city magistrates, a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor probably in literature. The burgesses who governed the Dutch towns were somewhat like these politarchs.

The gospel was carried to Thessalonica on Paul's second missionary journey. Leaving Luke in Philippi, and accompanied by Silas, he passed through the smaller towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia and journeyed one hundred miles west to Thessalonica. The smaller places could be evangelized from the two larger cities to the east and west. It was the practice of Paul to plant churches in large cities, the centers of population and influence, and to radiate from them through the surrounding country. As was his custom, he went to the synagogue. The infallible rule was "to the Jews first." Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and, though Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, he gave the Jews the first chance. There was an additional reason for going to the synagogue. It was surrounded by proselytes in various stages of passing from paganism to Judaism. They were sick of heathenism and were seeking the healing balm. In their minds and hearts the gospel seed found fruitful soil. The Episcopal bishop to Brazil expressed the opinion that the missionaries would

do well not to devote much time to superstitious Romanists, who may be compared to the Jews, but seek to win the unbelievers and skeptics who were dissatisfied with the old religion and seeking for the truth.

For three weeks, at least, Paul preached in the synagogue. Some Jews, a number of God-fearing Greeks, and not a few noble women were converted. Aristarchus and Secundus are two whose names are preserved in Acts 20:4, and who attend him on his subsequent voyage to Jerusalem. Demas was probably another. His name occurs in the last reference found in the second letter to Timothy, and it is an unhappy one. Having loved the present world and wishing to make a fortune, he deserted the apostle in time of need and returned to Thessalonica, whose trade held more attractions for him than the company of a penniless prisoner in Rome.

Those "gentlewomen" were an ornament to the gospel. Wherever Christianity went it found ready adherents among women. At Berea prominent ladies believed the gospel. Among the two converts mentioned in cultured Athens was Damaris, a gentlewoman. How much Baptists owe to the love and loyalty of the women! When it was against the law in Virginia for Baptists to preach except in a licensed place, and only one license was issued for a county and that under much red tape, and they were required to pay taxes to support an established church; when they were a people despised and persecuted, a gentlewoman, Mrs. Herndon of Fredericksburg, Virginia, recognized the Baptists as the New Testament people. Her husband bitterly opposed her baptism, and she agreed to be immersed in a large tub provided in

the home. While the ordinance was being administered he paced the floor upstairs in a furious rage with their baby in his arms. Shortly afterwards he visited the Baptist ministers to confound them, affirming that they were ignorant and uncultured men. From the New Testament they reasoned with him concerning the Kingdom of God and convinced him. When he returned to his home he exclaimed, "Wife, they've got me, they've got me!" The conversion of that one woman was the first of those large and honorable families which are to-day a source of pride to the Baptists—the Herndons, Fifes and Willises.

In Richmond, there lived a highly respectable gentleman and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Archibald Thomas, both members of the "Established Church." She became convinced that the Baptists were the people of the New Testament and, despite her husband's opposition, united with them. He declared he would not see her baptized—that it was an indecent act. She lovingly, but firmly, adhered to her convictions. On the day for the baptism, the carriage drove to the front gate for the gentlelady. She left the house alone, and as she entered the carriage was surprised to find her husband. "Why, I did not think you were going," she remarked. "Well, I thought if you were determined to be immersed, I would go along and see that it was done with some decorum." She was baptized by Dr. John Kerr in the James River, while her husband looked on with cynicism. The Spirit of God touched his heart, and the ordinance of baptism preached its message. Just as Dr. Kerr lifted his hand to pronounce the benediction, Mr. Thomas interrupted him, "Dr. Kerr, is it permissible to make a profes-

sion of faith and be baptized forthwith?" "Mr. Thomas, it is not only permissible, but eminently scriptural." So the irate husband, whose heart was softened, was buried with Christ in baptism and returned to his home in his wet clothes. Thus again the Baptist faith began with a gentlewoman, to whom are related the Thomases, Williams, Worthams and Pattersons, who are among the best families that have ever represented the Baptist denomination.

The success of Paul and his companions aroused the jealousy of the unbelieving Jews. They incited the rascals and idle fellows to mob violence. There were many "lewd men of the baser sort" loafing in the streets of the city. They readily joined in the cry against the missionaries and filled the whole city with an uproar. The house of Jason, a Jew of property and hospitality, who had been converted, was attacked. Failing to find the missionaries, the rascals dragged Jason and other Christians before the magistrates. Ah, the malice of the Jews! It was blacker than that of the heathen in Philippi. So it was from the beginning. Pilate the pagan was willing to release Jesus, but the cruel Jews were unrelenting. Charges like those brought against Jesus were lodged against the Christians. They were twofold: (1) Sedition—"They have raised a tumult through the empire." (2) Treason —"They have set Cæsar's authority at defiance, declaring there is another emperor, one called Jesus." Roman jurisprudence was often the aegis of Christianity, and under its protection there was some security. Jason was put under bond, and Paul and Silas were sent forty-five miles to Berea. Thence, Paul went to Athens and thence to Corinth,

from which place he wrote two letters to the Thessalonians.

Paul was the author of thirteen letters, not counting Hebrews, whose authorship is doubtful. They may be classified in four groups:

I. I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians — at Corinth. 51 A.D. — Second journey.

II. I Corinthians—at Ephesus; II Corinthians—in Macedonia — 57 A.D.; Galatians, Romans — at Corinth—58 A.D. — Third journey.

III. Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians — at Rome—62 A.D. or 63 A.D.

IV. I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy — Pastoral letters—63 A.D. or 66 A.D. Place unknown. Seems to be last writing of Paul.

All of these letters, except Romans, are to Jews and to churches he had founded, or to men converted under his ministry. It is interesting to note how we came to have these New Testament letters. He was unable to visit the churches as often as he desired, and instead of a visit sent a letter. Twice in a short time he was frustrated in the desire to visit the Thessalonians, and resorted to the pen to convey his affection and instructions. He visited Macedonia a second time on his way from Ephesus to Greece on the third missionary journey, but that was several years after these letters were written. A comparison of Acts 17:1-9 and I and II Thessalonians furnishes the data for the character of this church.

1. The church born in a revival. Paul's most

successful preaching was done in Thessalonica. The word of the Lord ran and was glorified. The Thessalonians received the word of the Lord, not as the word of men, but as it was in truth the word of God. From them the word of the Lord sounded out, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Paul spoke of their receptivity to the truth and how they turned from idols to serve the living and true God. Modern revivals are often under the disadvantage of short time. When the meeting gets well under way, the visiting minister must return to his local work and the largest results are not reaped.

2. The financial aspect was not to the fore in the Thessalonian revival. "For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail; for laboring night and day, for we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." The modern evangelist attaches too much importance to the compensation which he will receive and thus seriously cripples his influence before the church and the world. Paul could sincerely say he never wore a "cloak of covetousness" and called them and God to witness. A little later the Philippians sent a contribution and this supplemented his personal earnings. We can see the wisdom of Paul's course. A collection taken for his own support would have laid him open to the charge that he was greedy for filthy lucre and would have effectually closed the minds of the people to the gospel. The same principle holds in our foreign mission work and makes it necessary to practice economy and endure hardships and also for the churches at home, like the church at Philippi, to contribute to their support until Christianity has become so understood that the

people will not misjudge a collection. Self-support should follow; and it did at Thessalonica, and even more. Those Christians materially aided missionary efforts and philanthropic enterprises elsewhere. A true analogy may be drawn between Paul's churches and the churches on foreign mission fields.

3. A church which secured the oversight of pastors. This we conclude from I Thessalonians 5:12, 13, "But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their own works' sake." The words pastor, bishop and elder are used interchangeably in the New Testament to designate the same officer. The elders at Ephesus were called bishops and were charged to feed the flock as pastors or shepherds. Evidently the New Testament churches enjoyed a plurality of pastors. The bad rule in country churches in the South is for the pastor to have a plurality of churches, the reverse of the New Testament practice. Pastors, by appointment of the Holy Spirit and election of the congregation, are the God-appointed and humanly recognized leaders of the churches. The deacons are servants. Pastors are men who "labor" and are over the people in the Lord and admonish them. The members must esteem the pastors "exceedingly highly." A pastor may not be admirable in all his traits, but these Christians overlooked such defects in the light of "their works' sake." The president of Baylor University sent an appeal to the students of that institution for contributions toward a needed fund. He said: "I ask this, not for my sake, but

for Baylor and for Christ." When members get the right conception of the pastoral office they will render loyal support whether they like him or not. It should be done for his "work's sake."

4. The trinity of graces was in this church. "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope." "Put on the breast-plate of faith and love and for an helmet the hope of salvation." Faith worked. It stood the test of James: "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will prove to thee my faith by my works." Love burned brightly. "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it to all the brethren that are in all Macedonia." This is a beautiful thought, that the love of one Christian for another is the result of going to school to God. If we do not love we have not been apt students in that divine school. One of John's remarks about a Christian was: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Hope was present through all trials. "For your patience and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions which you endure." In the dark days of persecution their hope was so vivid that they thought the Lord's return was at hand.

5. The fellowship of the Thessalonian church was marred and its usefulness impaired by certain spiritual idlers. They are described as men who "worked not at all, but are busybodies." The two go together. One who has no employment finds ample opportunity and abundance of time to run the business of other people. Gossiping is the trade of those who have no trade.

"Have you ever heard of Gossip Town,
On the shores of Falsehood Bay,
Where old Dame Rumor, with rustling gown,
Is going the livelong day?

It isn't far to Gossip Town,
For people who want to go;
The Idleness Train will take you down
In just an hour or so.

The Thoughtless Road is a popular route,
And most folks start that way,
But it's steep down grade; if you don't watch out,
You land in Falsehood Bay.

You glide through the valley of Vicious Town,
And into the tunnel of Hate,
Then crossing the Add-to bridge you walk
Right into the City gate.

The principal street is called 'They Say,' and
'I've Heard' is the public well,
And the breezes that blow from Falsehood Bay
Are laden with 'Don't you Tell.'

In the midst of the town is 'Tell Tale Park';
You're never quite safe while there,
For its owner is Madame 'Suspicious Remark,'
Who lives on the street 'Don't Care.'

Just back of the park is Slander's Row,
'Twas there that Good Name died,
Pierced by a dart from Jealousy's bow,
In the hands of Envious Pride.

From Gossip Town peace long since fled,
But envy and strife and woe,
And sorrow and care you'll find instead,
If ever you chance to go."

"We command and exhort in Jesus Christ that with quietness they work and eat their own bread." This is the gospel of honest toil. Idleness was a cause for non-fellowship. "If any obey not our word by this epistle, note that man that ye have no company with him to the end that he may be ashamed." Church charity is not for lazy members. "If he will not work, neither let him eat." The rule of Christianity is for the relatives of a dependent member to support him, and the charity of the church is to be dispensed only to the industrious dependents who have no relatives able to provide for their necessities. Jesus Christ dignified labor. He was the son of a carpenter and earned His own living and helped to support His mother and younger brothers and sisters by manual labor. The village of Nazareth knew Him as "the carpenter" and "the carpenter's Son."

"Strong, with the strength of earth beneath their tread,
Slow as the marching stars they gaze upon—
Squadrons of living Men and living Dead—
The legions of Democracy press on.

As one they come. 'And who in yonder van
Illumines all the path that men may see?
'I think he is a fellow working-man—
A Carpenter, they say, from Galilee.' "

Paul, His most illustrious follower, was like unto his Lord. A French king worked in a carpenter's shop, and his queen taught her maids in a dairy. The secular papers report expressions from the son of a New York millionaire whose father discontinued his allowance because of the son's marriage.

The young man, who was well educated, gave this interview: "I have always wanted to earn my own living. I am glad that the time has arrived when I am obliged to do so. It makes one utilize what brains he possesses. The one great drawback to wealth, I believe, is that it is apt to make one neglect his own ability." The world war, as one of its beneficent by-products, forced America for the time being to discontinue her waste, taught the children of the rich to work and threw many upon their own resources who had been leaning upon others.

6. The Thessalonians believed vividly in the second coming. The Bible may be divided into three periods: Christ will come; Christ has come; Christ will come again. For four thousand years they looked for His coming. That hope was the brightest star in the firmament of Messianic prophecy and the tallest peak in the ranges of Old Testament inspiration. In the fullness of time He came. For three and one-half years the message was: "He has come." John the Baptist sounded it from the banks of the Jordan: "Behold the Lamb of God," and Jesus Himself declared, "I am He." Since the ascension, the eye of Christendom has been looking for the return of that same Jesus "Who was taken up from you into heaven."

The letters to the Thessalonians contain more data upon the second coming of Christ than any other one source in the New Testament. There are nine distinct references:

I Thess. 1:10: "And to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come."

I Thess. 2:19: "For what is our hope, or joy, or

crown of rejoicings? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

I Thess. 3:13: "To the end he may establish your hearts, unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus, with all his saints."

I Thess. 4:14ff: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also those which sleep with Jesus will God bring with him," etc.

I Thess. 5:2: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."

I Thess. 5:23: "Your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

II Thess. 1:7: "And unto you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed in heaven with his mighty angels."

II Thess. 2:1: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together with him."

II Thess. 2:8: "Then shall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

Coördinating these passages and arranging them, we have the following thoughts:

1. Paul taught the second coming so emphatically and vividly that they erroneously judged He would come in their day. Their religion was summed up in these two things: "We have a living God in truth and wait for His Son from the heavens." In the light of Christ's second coming they learned to look for that "Kingdom and glory of God, to which they were called and for which they were suffer-

ing." It was a subject of intense desire and fervent expectation to the apostle himself, and he impressed his feelings upon the disciples to an uncommon degree.

2. Converts are the preacher's jewels at the second coming. When the First Baptist Church at Waco, Texas, celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. B. H. Carroll's pastorate, Dr. J. M. Frost, of Nashville, Tennessee, preached the sermon. It was a memorable occasion. That ministry had been even more conspicuous for its wide-reaching influence and constructive leadership than for its length of time. The preacher selected as his text: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" The vast congregation was moved to tears and lifted toward heaven as the preacher described how, at the second coming of Christ, all the converts under that pastorate of twenty-five years would be pointed to with pride by their father in the gospel and be held up to the Lord as His possession.

"If grief in Heaven could find a place,
Or shame the worshiper bow down,
Who meets the Saviour face to face,
'Twould be to wear a starless crown.

Nor find in all that countless host
That meet before the eternal throne,
Who like us were sinners lost,
And say we led them Home."

3. The believing dead are now with Christ and will return with Him. The intermediate state is a relic of pagan mythology. The Bible teaches that

the spirit goes immediately to its final resting place. "Then shall the body return to the dust as it was, but the spirit unto God who gave it" (Ecc. 12:7). Paul thought that "to die is gain, for when I am absent from the body, I am present with the Lord." There was no intervening time or intermediate place for the spirit after it left the body. The thief prayed, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." Jesus answered, like a flash of light, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"—not to-morrow, not after the egregious sins of that criminal, who acknowledged he was dying justly, were eradicated in purgatory, but to-day.

Where is paradise? The word is used three times in the New Testament: (1) Paul was caught up even to the third heaven "unto paradise" (II Cor. 12:2-4). The Jews thought of the air where the birds fly as the first heaven; the firmament where the stars are as the second heaven, and the highest place where Jehovah sits enthroned as the third heaven. Paul identifies paradise with the third heaven. He was too intelligent a Jew not to know the import of the term "third heaven." (2) In the Apocalypse we read: "To him that overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). The tree of life is located by the river of life which "goes forth out of the throne of God" (Rev. 22:1f). Paradise is where the tree of life is and the tree of life blooms on the banks of the river that flows from under the throne of God. (3) Jesus used the word once: "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Two verses later Jesus said: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." His spirit went to God, the saved thief went with Him, and they were

both in paradise, which is where God is; that is, in heaven. Paradise and heaven are clearly one and the same place.

Dives died and "in hell he lifted up his eyes." He did not lodge in purgatory. He went at once to a place of "torments." His condition was unchangeable. There was a great gulf *fixed.* The Roman Catholic dogma of purgatory rightly grieves the living Christians. If our believing dead are in purgatory, well may we have anxiety. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others which have no hope." Then he shows that the living Christians have no advantage over the dead. Their difficulty was just here. What would become of the dead Christians at the second coming? Paul tells them that their spirits are with Jesus and will come with Him and that their bodies will be raised before the living are translated. They have an advantage over the living Christians. The departed and living Christians are awaiting

> "One far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

That event means reunion, and not separation, for the dead and the living saints.

(4) The time of His coming is unknown. "Of the times and the dates it is unnecessary that anything be written to you. For ye yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night." Jesus said that day was unknown to Himself and to the angels in heaven. There are people who know more than the angels, or Jesus, and fix the time for Christ's return. Their

time-tables have done much harm. Two facts are certain: (a) His coming will be unexpected. The thief does not let the householder know when he expects to come. Paul uses the same figure as Jesus: "As a thief in the night." Furthermore, it will be as unexpected as the flood. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." (b) His coming will be sudden. "While they are saying peace and safety, then in a moment destruction falls upon them." The unconverted will be frightened, as daylight frightens the thief. "Two women will be grinding at the mill, one will be taken, the other left."

(5) Certain events will precede His coming. A phrase in Paul's first letter misled the Salonicans. They interpreted "suddenly" to mean immediately. He wrote a second letter for the express purpose of correcting their erroneous interpretation. What a warning against assuming that your interpretation of Scripture is infallible! Before Christ's return there must be a supreme manifestation of evil. This development will be twofold: (a) Apostasy within the church. "Let no one in any way deceive you, for that day cannot come without the coming of the apostasy first" (II Thess. 2:3). This probably refers to Romanism which culminated in the dogma of papal infallibility in 1870. (b) The manifestation of the man of sin. "And the appearing of the man of sin, the son of perdition, who sets himself against,

and exalts himself above, every so-called 'god' or object of worship and goes the length of taking his seat in the very temple of God, giving it out that he himself is God" (II Thess. 2:4).

This is the most obscure passage in the epistles, if not in the entire Bible. There have been a number of anti-Christs. Antiochus Epiphenes was one and the Papacy was another. The books of Daniel, Zechariah, Isaiah and Revelation refer to anti-Christ. After reading a thousand pages on the subject I am unable to form a satisfactory opinion as to who this man of sin is. He has had types in history, but his appearing is in the future. He is the lawless one. Lawlessness is already at work in secret. He must come before the second advent. His appearing will be attended by various miracles and tokens and delusive marvels, and by every kind of wicked deception for those who are on the way to perdition. His influence will be over those who have refused to believe the truth and have taken pleasure in unrighteousness. He will be alive when Jesus comes. The Lord Jesus will sweep him away with the tempest of His anger and utterly overwhelm him by the awful splendor of His coming. The passage appears to be literal and very direct and positive. Others may speculate about who this lawless one is. The thought I am endeavoring to express is that whoever he is, he must come before our Lord's second return.

(6) Jesus comes the second time as vindicator and judge. He came the first time as Saviour. A manger was His cradle, Egypt His refuge, and poverty His portion. He comes the second time as judge. In the splendor of the clouds, accompanied by all the holy angels, He comes to vindicate His

people, and to judge the wicked. As vindicator, "it is a righteous thing for Him to requite with affliction those who are afflicting you; and to requite with rest you who are suffering affliction; rest with us at the reappearing of the Lord Jesus from heaven, attended by His mighty angels" (II Thess. 1:6f). As judge, He will award eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, as justice to those who know not God, and those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus. Annihilationists can derive no solid comfort from this Scripture. Everlasting destruction is not annihilation. It is expressly called punishment and not consequence. Neither science nor Scripture knows anything about annihilation. The form of matter may be changed by fire, or other processes, but matter cannot be destroyed. There is the same quantity of matter in the universe as when God created it. If matter cannot be destroyed how much less can spirit, the part of man made in the likeness of God!

The miscarriage of justice on earth demands final judgment. Truth is often on the scaffold and wrong is on the throne. The Christian is oppressed while the scoffer sits in the seats of authority. The laws of society are steeped in injustice. Down in man's heart, in his serious moments, is the demand for a future judgment where wrongs will be righted. Stopford A. Brooke's little poem on justice is as true as preaching:

"Three men went out one summer night,
No care had they, or aim,
And dined and drank.
'Ere we go home, we'll have,'
They said, 'a game.'

Three girls began that summer night
A life of endless shame,
And went through drink, disease, and death,
As swift as racing flame.

Lawless and homeless, foul, they died;
Rich, loved, and praised, the men;
But when they all shall meet with God,
And justice speaks—what then?"

(7) The final resurrection will occur and sanctification will be complete at the second coming. "The dead in Christ shall rise first." That is, before the translation of the living. Compare other Scriptures with this for the simultaneous resurrection of the just and unjust. "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation." "There shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust." "I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God." "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, with all His holy angels, there shall be gathered before Him all nations."

At the general resurrection salvation, which began in election and worked out in justification, preservation, and sanctification, will be finished. "So that you will be faultlessly holy in the presence of our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His holy ones." Sanctification of soul is perfected at death. Not by anything in the article of death, but by the vision of Christ which is vouchsafed to the soul when it leaves the body. The soul becomes like Him when it sees Him as He is. Sanctification of body is perfected at the resurrection. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown

a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:42-44). Not only is it sanctified, it is transformed "into conformity to the body of His glory" (Phil. 3:21). Glorification takes place at the second coming. The world, looking upon our imperfect lives, may not be attracted to Jesus and may ask: What has Jesus done for you? What can He do with such faulty material? He is working, and He is able to subject all things unto Himself. By and by, with all sin eradicated, with bodies raised and glorified, and the spirits of just men made perfect living in those sinless bodies, the skeptics will look with admiration upon the masterpiece of Jesus—a saved man.

If the hope of the Thessalonians was too vivid, ours is too vague. The thought of our Lord's second coming has disappeared from much of our theology and is no longer the inspiration of some Christians. Others overemphasize pre-millenarianism or post-millenarianism. Deacon Fred Freeman, of Denver, Colorado, wisely said he was a pro-millenarian. Dr. Broadus used to say some Scriptures seem to teach "pre" and some "post;" that God had, evidently, left it uncertain that all might be watchful. Surely we can all agree on pro-millenarianism—we can all be for the millennium. "Watch, for in such an hour as ye think not of the Son of Man cometh." Fix in your mind the belief and be ready when He comes.

This doctrine is precious and practical. (1) It is precious. We bury our dead—the young, the mature, the aged. A lock of hair in a father's fob, a baby's shoe in a mother's room, a woman's picture in a son's or a lover's watch. Ah, these tell the tragic story of our sorrows! When all human helpers fail and comforts flee, whither do we turn?

Where are our believing dead? What is their state? Shall we see them again? These are the questions that search the sorrow-riven heart and this doctrine answers them all with assurance and comfort. Let the Corinthian biologists deny the resurrection upon natural hypotheses. We answer, "If there is a natural body, there is a spiritual body." Let the Spartan Stoics coldly scorn our tears. We answer: "Yes, we sorrow, but not as others who have no hope."

> "Alas for him who never sees
> The stars shine through his cypress trees;
> Who hopeless lays his dead away,
> Nor looks to see the breaking day
> Across the mournful marbles play."

(2) It is practical. It was the atmosphere the Christians breathed, the light in which they walked, when they did their mightiest deeds. The future, a riddle to cynics and philosophers, was to them filled with the promise of a certain and signal victory. It is striking and significant that Paul prefaced his defense of the resurrection with the exhortation: "But let all things be done becomingly and in order" (I Cor. 14:40), and concluded that defense with an appeal to the beloved brethren to be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). Two more practical appeals to Christians cannot be conceived. The motive for these duties was "knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." The hope of Christ's coming is the incentive to service, the promise of reward and the pledge of triumph. We follow Paul when we associate hope with service, prophecy with practice and vision with obedience.

CHAPTER IX

CORINTH—THE WORLDLY CHURCH

Three cities rivaled in "the grandeur that was Greece": Athens, the intellectual brain; Sparta, the military body, and Corinth, the commercial arms and limbs. Corinth was geographically between the other two and flourished long after their glory had departed. Located midway between Achaia and Peloponnesus, on a strategic isthmus with a seaport to the east and to the west, with facilities for transporting commerce across the isthmus and thus avoiding the hazardous voyage around the Peloponnesus, it outranked as a market any city of ancient times. Athens and Sparta lost their preëminence when Greece laid her independence at the feet of Alexander. Corinth continued to thrive. Though sacked by Mummius it was reëstablished by Julius Cæsar and regained its pristine commercial hegemony. The natural trade advantages were irresistible.

The commercial centers are likely to be the centers of pleasure and indulgence. In Corinth, men worshiped the "almighty dollar," drank deep at the fountain of pleasure, rocked in the chair of luxury, wallowed in the mire of vice, and lived for the things seen and temporal. The worship of Aphrodite (Venus), to whose licentious exercises a thousand priestesses were dedicated, made Corinth a cesspool of impurity and "Corinthian" a synonym for shameful pollution. Sumptuous theaters, palaces and temples, whose exteriors shone like burnished gold, bedecked the city. The ornate caps to the fluted

columns were more artistic than the simple Ionic or the severe Doric. Wordsworth's verses, "Upon Westminster Bridge," September 3, 1802, might have been written of Corinth in 51:

"Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty;
This City now doth like a garment wear.

The beauty of the morning! Silent, bare,
Sleeps, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air."

Athletes from near and far contested in the Isthmian games in Corinth. Sport and business, pleasure and profit, luxury and pride, riches and poverty, debauchery and crime, combined to make Corinth the most wicked city since Sodom and Gomorrah. Polonius' advice," "Put money in thy purse," was appropriate to visitors to Corinth.

The colony of Corinth founded by Cæsar was, in Paul's time, the seat of government of Achaia. The Roman proconsul resided here. He was the appointee of the senate. To this corrupt city, this center of trade, this resort of pleasure, this seat of political power, the apostle came alone, near the close of the year 51. His heart was sick over the idolatry at Athens. His spirit was sad over his relative failure in that cultured environment. Was it their spiritual obtuseness or his faulty method, or both? His first acquaintances in Corinth were a devout Jewish couple, Aquila and Priscilla, natives of Pontus on the Black Sea. They were later ex-

pelled from Rome by Claudius, the cowardly successor to the pompous Caius Caligula. After the murder of Caligula by his own servants the Praetorian guard made Claudius emperor, he being the brother of Germanicus and the uncle of Caius. The Praetorians found him hiding in the imperial palace; one of them saw his feet behind the tapestry with which the wall was hung; the Praetorian dragged him out, and, on seeing who he was, cried out that he should be emperor. God made the wrath of this stupid, woman-dominated emperor opposing the Jews to praise Him.

Two pious Jews who had adopted Roman names were Paul's first and fast friends in that "vanity fair." The common trade of tent-making and congenial temperaments were their chief ties. We know neither when nor where they were converted. We do know they were true friends of Paul, and preserved his life for the churches; that they were parental instructors of Apollos; that they kept house in Ephesus and had a church in their house in Rome. Blessed is their memory! The kind of associates one forms upon entering a large city reveals his character and shapes his course. "Evil associations corrupt good morals." Paul made a wise choice in these friends.

Another index of character is the place where one first goes when as a stranger he enters a city. Is it to the theater, the cabaret, the race course, the dance hall, the gambling hall? Or, is it to the house of God? Paul went not to the Temple of Venus, nor to the Isthmian games, nor to the marketplace, but to the synagogue. They were all open on the Sabbath, like Chicago and Paris, but he chose the best place. He first preached the good tidings to the Jews and

proselytes. He was working with his hands for sustenance six days and every seventh day he preached and tried to win over both Jews and Greeks. Single-handed and alone, he labored with straitened spirit. The arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia heartened him. His spirit became more fervent, his manner more solemn.

The theme he discussed was: *Jesus is the Messiah.* There were two main thoughts emphasized: (1) The Jewish Messiah was to be a suffering Messiah. (2) Jesus was that Messiah. The usual result followed—the Jews opposed Him with abusive language. Jesus had given instructions about apostles shaking off the dust from their feet as a witness against the obtuse (Luke 9:5). Paul and Barnabas obeyed these instructions literally in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:5). Now, for the second time, he shook his clothes by way of protest and said: "Your ruin will be upon your own heads. I am not responsible; in the future I will go among the Gentiles"—in Corinth.

Titus Justus, a devout Greek, owned a house hard by the synagogue. Thither Paul resorted and continued to preach. Crispus, the warden of the synagogue, believed on the Lord and so did all his house. Ah, such preaching as was heard in that house! Not in the surpassing power of eloquence, but in the converting power of the Spirit. Not in earthly wisdom, but in that hidden wisdom which had not entered into the heart of man until God revealed it. Not in self-assurance and conceit, but in conscious feebleness and in fear and in deep anxiety. Not on sensational or philosophical themes, but one persistent, unchangeable theme, Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. It was then and there that God chose and used the

things which the world regards as foolish in order to put its wise men to shame; the things which the world regards as destitute of influence in order to put its powerful things to shame; and the things which the world regards as base and sets utterly at naught in order to reduce to nothing things that do exist; to prevent any mortal man from boasting in the presence of God.

From time to time, many of the Corinthians, who heard Paul, believed and received baptism (Acts 18:8). Prominent among them were Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanus, all of whom had the unique distinction of being baptized by Paul. Silas and Timothy baptized the other converts. Not since Philippi has baptism been mentioned, though it was invariably practiced. The last mention was the introduction to the evangelization of Europe. This mention is in the last city evangelized on the second tour. We are told the practice at the beginning and the end. We may logically infer the custom in the intervening time and places. Here, as everywhere the subject is mentioned, faith preceded baptism. Here also is a suggestion of the significance of baptism. Paul thanked God that he baptized only a few, a statement irreconcilable with the position of baptismal regeneration (I Cor. 4:16). Furthermore, he affirmed that Christ did not send him to baptize, but to proclaim good news (I Cor. 1:17). This is contradictory to baptism for the remission of sins.

Discouragement and depression are common to man. The finest preachers are very susceptible to despondency. Read the lives of Frederick W. Robertson and A. J. Gordon for confirmation of this statement. The heavier the responsibility the more likely the discouragement. Paul, the whitest soul,

under the heaviest load, reached a crisis at Antioch. Every zealous pastor reaches it sometimes in his experience; perhaps, several times. A discouraged preacher! Analyze Paul's condition: (1) Memory of partial failure at Athens. He was called a babbler and treated with cold disdain. This hurt his spirit worse than Jewish stripes or Roman rods ever hurt his flesh. (2) Strenuous life of manual labor six days and preaching on the seventh. Either one was all a strong man could stand. A little boy had some people's conception of preaching. When asked why he would not be a preacher, he replied: "A preacher has nothing to do six days. I want something to do every day." (3) Poverty and inadequate nutrition. Wages were low, he was very poor, and half starved when succor came from Macedonia. (4) Consequent weakened physique. He was not robust at his best. In Corinth he was emaciated and worn. "I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling" is his own account. (5) Bitter and baneful opposition. The Jews opposed with that personal and unreasoning argument "themselves"—their pride, prejudices, passion. (6) Dread of personal violence. Paul was not a physical coward, but no sensible man wants to die. Only the reckless have no sense of physical fear.

A group of wounded soldiers in my home were asked by my wife if they were afraid when they went into battle with the Germans. "Sure," they said, "we trembled." One of them added: "If you ever hear a man who has gone over the top or gone up against machine guns say he was never afraid, take it from me, lady, he is lying." (7) Care of the churches. The Galatian churches were contemplating reunion with Judaism. Probably Paul knew it

already and was grieved. The saints at Salonica were doubting the Lord's return, or expecting it prematurely or perplexed about the fate of their believing dead, when He should return. This added anguish to Paul's spirit and he endeavored to correct their views in two epistles written from Corinth. (8) The unconsecrated wealth and moral degradation of the city. Trade flourished, wealth was multiplied, and men and morals decayed. "At Corinth, the trouble was not dogma, but deviltry, not dialectics but degradation, not prophecy but prostitution, not differences of opinion but chasms in conduct."

"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

(9) Loss of sleep. Labor left little time for sleep and anxiety drove that from his few quiet hours. The surest and shortest way to shatter the nerves is by insomnia. Professor Sledd of Wake Forest wrote:

"Wouldst know the saddest of sad things?
It is with a sleepless eye to lie
Watching the weary hours go by,
'Til weariness impatient waits
Beside day's grim unopened gates
For all the untried morrow brings."

People must either sleep or die, or land in the asylum. (10) Mental reaction and spiritual depression. Yes, Paul was "down in the dumps." The sky was black. "In all our distress and trouble," he writes at this time. He was disheartened and ready to quit Corinth, if not the ministry.

God came to his relief. God always does. He appeared to Moses in the burning bush, to Joshua over against Jericho, to young Isaiah the year his hero died, to Jesus in the Mount of Temptation and in the Garden of Agony, to Stephen when dying, and to Paul when dejected and defeated on the battlefield of his own heart. A vision of a man called Paul to Europe. "I will be with you all the way," was Jesus' promise. "Fear not, but speak, and hold not thy peace; because I am with thee, and no one shall assail thee to harm thee; because I have much people in this city," was Jesus' comforting and reassuring word.

Paul had many visions, but three especially for comfort and cheer. One in Jerusalem the night following the last trial before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23: 11f). The Lord assured him he should bear witness in Rome. A second, in the storm on the voyage to Rome when the last hope was vanishing (Acts 27: 23f). God assured him he should stand before Cæsar and that the lives of all on board should be spared. A third, and first in order of time, in Corinth at a greater spiritual crisis than either the one in Jerusalem or the one on the Mediterranean. The Lord had preserved the bodies of His servants. He can also revive and sustain the spirt. "Be not afraid. You have been maltreated in Philippi, driven by persecution out of Thessalonica and Berea, scornfully mocked in Athens, opposed by pride, prejudice and desire in Corinth. It is enough to break an iron nerve. Yours shall not break. Dismiss your fears; go on speaking and do not give up. I have much people in this city. They are in the blindness of heathenism, in the thralldom of sin. You do not know who they are, neither do they know, but I

know and I will call them out through your preaching. They have not chosen me, but I have chosen them. You stay where you are, a year and a half, calling into life those foreordained to life."

Analyze the night message to Paul. (1) Keep a stout heart. You are never whipped until you are whipped inside. (2) Keep on preaching. Service is the solvent for doubt. (3) No one shall hurt you. You are immortal until your work is done. (4) I have much people in this city. You are to call out the called. (5) Because I am with you.

"Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed!
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee
to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."

The vision had the designed effect. Paul was heartened and nothing seemed impossible. At the height of his success Gallio arrived as proconsul from Rome. He was brother to the philosopher Seneca, but of another type of character. Seneca's bronze bust presents one of the meanest faces I ever saw. Gallio was even tempered, amiable, gentlemanly, lovable, and devoted to justice. He was the noblest Roman of his day. He was a different man from those who ruled Philippi and Thessalonica. His name lives while theirs have perished. The Jews haled Paul before the civil authority upon a religious charge. He was always ready with his defense. This one time it was unnecessary. Gallio correctly divined the issue as being religious and not within the civil jurisdiction. The indictment was, therefore, quashed and the case dismissed.

Paul was probably glad over the turn of affairs, but we could wish he had been permitted to make his speech. The New Testament would have been that much richer.

The Greeks in the courthouse heard Gallio nonsuit the Jews. They disliked the Jews anyway. Now, for the first time in Christian history, Gentiles turn upon the Jews. They seized Sosthenes, successor to converted Crispus, the instigator of the prosecution, and beat him in the very presence of the court. Gallio did not concern himself in the least about this treatment of Sosthenes. Perhaps he thought Sosthenes deserved as much for bringing a trivial case to his court. His unconcern was not about the religious question—that was not discussed. It was about the beating of Sosthenes.

Then began the horrible history of Jewish persecution which blackens governments, and culminated in the confiscations, imprisonments, tortures, and deaths under the Russian Czar. Pogroms against the Jews continue to this day. They are cruelly unjust, but the Jews have provoked them. When we are asked why the Jew is disliked, excluded from clubs, ostracized from Gentile society, we answer by asking: Why does the Jew retain and cultivate those isolating and egotistical traits which have made him socially *persona non grata?* Why does he persist in his spiritual blindness and obdurate resistance to the best man of his race, Christianity's supreme Leader, the world's highest Martyr? The tract, "Charley Coalson," vividly and truthfully describes Jewish treatment of Christian Jews.

For a considerable time after this, Paul evangelized in Corinth. Multitudes were saved, all sorts—

fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, the avaricious, drunkards, swearers, and others guilty of unmentionable sins (I Cor. 6:9f). More classes of the depraved than Harold Begbee narrates in "Twice Born Men" were saved in that London of Greece. Gallio said the problem worth consideration was lewdness. Paul addressed himself to that problem in sermon and later in epistles. He accepted Gallio's challenge and presented a new way of living, a higher code of morals, a motive power that conquered corruption. The age-long struggle of the churches of Christ against intemperance, immorality and social vice; the never ceasing endeavor to produce pure living in an impure environment began in Corinth. "On social reform, Paul's letters to Corinth are the basic treatises, the Newton's Principia, with which all subsequent thinking has to reckon."

We see then that only two years sufficed for establishing a large and flourishing church in a city given over to the distractions of luxury—the theatre, the show, the dance, the brothel. What kind of a church was it? Dr. Stalker devotes a chapter of his useful little book, "Life of Saint Paul," to a discussion of the church at Corinth. He labels the chapter "Picture of a Pauline Church." He selects a bad sample to show what the Christians were like and what the aspect of their worship. A better pattern, more nearly approaching a model, was furnished by the church at Antioch. Neither was the church at Corinth, as some avow, the typical modern Baptist church. There is probably not a church in all our bounds whose members are guilty of the gross immoralities that shamed the Corinthians. Where is

one which possesses the miraculous gifts? No, Corinth was exceptional and in some respects unique. See the church as it was, its strength and weakness, its lights and shadows. Let us picture it true to reality, "scars and wrinkles," to borrow from Cromwell.

1. The foundation was Christ. The foundation of Stoicism was Zeno's philosophy that God and matter were inseparable and eternal—modern Pantheism. His ethics held that pleasure was no good and pain no evil; that the misfortunes of life were to be borne without emotion; that death ends all. The foundation of Epicureanism was Epicurus' philosophy of materialsm that denied the existence of God, the spirituality of the soul, the creation of anything, and avowed the rule of chance and fate. His ethics held that pleasure was the only good and pain the only evil. Virtue and vice were nothing in themselves. If virtue was to be cultivated it was only because it yielded enjoyment. If vice was to be avoided it was only because it yielded pain Neither Stoicism nor Epicureanism believed in a judgment or possessed a moral passion.

The foundation of the Corinthian Church was the Christ who had been revealed to and in Paul. "According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master-builder I laid a foundation. . . . For other foundation can no one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:10f). On that solid foundation he built a superstructure intended to be holy and harmonious. His ethics held that virtue was its own reward and punishment the penalty of transgression. His followers were redeemed from base living and dedicated unto God. A final judgment would try every man's work.

"The church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his new creation
By water and the word;
From heaven he came and sought her
To be his holy Bride;
With his own blood he bought her,
And for her life he died."

2. A variety of building material. Some members of that church were the conceited Jews, some the cultured Greeks. Some were free men, some were slaves. A few were from the high ranks of society, but the majority were from humble stations. It was the most mixed, heterogeneous, discordant congregation of all Paul's churches. In planting a church in that community Paul had to contend with endless logomachies (I Cor. 1:17; 2:13), personal vanity and rivalries (I Cor. 2: 21; 4:6; 7:5, 6; II Cor. 10:12; 11:12), a disposition to set intellectual above moral consideration (I Cor. 5:2), a general laxity of manners and morals (I Cor. 5:11; 6:9f), a preference of individual convenience to general welfare (I Cor. 6:12), a tendency to deny the idea of a future life and to live for unrestrained enjoyment in this life (I Cor. 13).

3. Deplorable internal conditions. Less than three years elapsed after Paul's first visit when information reached him in Ephesus about disquieting conditions in the Corinthian congregation. The household of Chloe were his informants. He would listen to no secret slander and their names must be attached to the information. Every one should know that he had talked with Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. He also sent Timothy to conduct a private inquiry. Tittle-tattle is no ground for accusing

a brother or a church. Paul would have none of it. He will not write others about it, but the accused themselves. He will not even tell Titus. He praises their virtues to him. He investigates thoroughly and is so accurate in the facts cited in the first epistle that they remain uncorrected in the second. What an example to all preachers! By letters, by personal representatives, and by personal visit, he dealt with the serious situation candidly and courageously. The letters to this church reveal more of the humanness of Paul than all the other literature combined. What were the conditions he diagnosed and treated?

(1) Divisions over preachers. Four factions tore the church. One faction preferred the preaching of Apollos. This eloquent preacher from Alexandria visited Corinth and preached after Paul left. His sentences were stately, his periods well-rounded, his language ornate, his voice resonant, his gestures graceful, his presence imposing, his manner impressive. A faction that depreciated Paul's mean appearance and simple speech went into ecstasies over Apollos. *He* was *their* kind of preacher. Another faction were partisans of Peter. The Corinthians had never seen him, but certain brethren had come over from Judea and told them about him—his pent-up emotion which burst over in his preaching and moved to tears and action. *He* was *their* kind of preacher. Another faction rallied around Paul, their father in the gospel, and were more zealous because others discounted him by their comparison with Apollos and Peter. Paul suited them. A fourth faction simply called themselves Christians. They were the proudest and bitterest sectarians of all.

Paul did not encourage his partisans. He rebuked

all the factions. His biting words could but wound. He would not be a party to dividing a church. God would destroy the influence and usefulness of him who destroyed a church. Divisions did, and do, work destruction to the preacher and to the cause. He would exalt Christ and thus form the only unifying bond. He asks, Is Christ cut up and parceled out among you? Was I crucified for you? Did I baptize you? How unseemly, then, your disputes about preachers. Oratorical preaching does not save men. The cross saves. Worldly wisdom did not devise the plan of salvation and but few of the "wise and great" are saved. Christ was made unto you wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. This is all spiritually discerned. Partisanship hinders spiritual progress because it thinks of the man instead of his message. Preachers are only laborers of differing efficiency, the substantial work is God's. Put down all personal rivalries in the church. They are childish and unspiritual. Alas, if after nearly twenty centuries we had only learned these lessons taught by Paul!

(2) Disorders in morals and religion. Sins are gregarious. Shakespeare said:

"One sin, I know, another doth provoke;
Murder's as near to lust as flame to smoke."

A bad tooth poisons the system and causes rheumatism. Contention over preachers created an atmosphere in which other disorders grew. Jealousy was followed by immorality, controversy, indifference, vanity, gluttony. Paul advised that the incestuous persons be expelled for his sake and for the sake of the church. If he were a Christian at

heart he would come back. The leaven of evil permeates the whole lump. Offenders generally were not to be held in spiritual intercourse.

Contentions before the world were to be avoided. Grave crimes lead to these law-suits. Brethren should not go to law before the courts of the world. The saints shall judge the world. The highest judicatory power is vested in them. The church-court is fairer, more just and less expensive than the world-court.

This advice was not given to a rural or village church with its simple customs and quiet ways. It was given to a church in a city with the most complicated commercial life, where differences of opinion might easily arise between buyers and sellers, traders and carriers, masters and slaves; a church which had in its membership public officials like Erastus, the city treasurer; and which existed under a government whose jurisprudence was the precedent for the best of modern times.

Bitter experience should have taught God's people this truth. There is a more excellent way for Christians. Samuel Harris, a pioneer preacher in Virginia, once went to a man who owed him some money and told him that his family was in need and asked him for payment. "I can't pay you." "I want wheat; you have a field of it." "I have other uses for it." "When will you pay me?" "Not till you sue for it." Elder Harris went and prayed. "Dear Lord, shall I quit Thy cause to sue him, or wilt Thou open up some other way?" "Harris, keep on preaching. I will become security for the payment." The preacher sent a receipted bill to the debtor. "I have not paid you." "You said not till the end of a suit. I sued you at the court of heaven. Jesus

agreed to pay me, so I have given you His discharge." In a short time Elder Harris received enough wheat to pay the debt in full.

Indifference to the consciences of the weak is wrong. Eating the meat left over from the heathen sacrifices may not hurt an enlightened Christian. The idol is nothing and the meat is like other meat. But you are bound to consider what are likely to be the results of your conduct on the unenlightened brethren. Christian liberty is restrained by the needs of others. This is why Paul preached without charge, ignored self for the benefit of others. Self-restraint is hard but you are obligated to practice it. The obligation is not imposed by rules laid down by the scrupulous; but arises from your duty to seek God's glory, the edification of your brethren, and the promotion of the Master's Kingdom. The highest exercise of a right is to surrender that right for good of others.

Vanity is a vice. Women are peculiarly susceptible to its temptations. They like to wear fine clothes, perhaps more to be seen of women than of men. Men are also freakish. Long hair and a veil do not become men. These are woman's ornaments. Man represents the likeness and supremacy of God; but woman represents the supremacy of man. Man was not made from woman, woman was made from man; and man was not created for woman, but woman for man. Of course, in the Lord, woman does not exist apart from man, any more than man apart from woman; for as the woman was made from man, so man is now made from woman, while both, like all things, come from God. Women should not dress gaudily, nor gossip, nor ask hasty questions in church; but wait until they get home and ask their

husbands in quietness. This is according to natural fitness and is the custom of the churches.

Paul treats several phases of the question of marriage in Corinth. He tells us incidentally that the Apostles and brothers of Jesus were all married (I Cor. 9:5). He advises against marriage where support is precarious. The "present distress" made it inadvisable. Yet, he honored God's primeval law and said: "My advice to you is to let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband." Marriage was his figure of the mystical union between Christ and His church. In studying Paul's views concerning the relations of believers and unbelievers who have intermarried it is well to remember that he introduces them with the words: "But to the rest say I, not the Lord." And in reference to his whole discussion in the 7th chapter of I Corinthians we must, of course, keep in mind the conditions which prevailed at the time. He was opposed to believers entering nuptial bonds with pagans. But he held that in any case where, having intermarried as unbelievers, one of the contracting parties became a Christian, separation ought not on that account to follow. If the unbeliever refused to live with the Christian then they should live apart, but not secure a divorce. It was separation *a mensa et thoro,* to use Blackstone's phrase, but not divorce. Paul never discussed the grounds for divorce. Jesus said infidelity to the marriage vow was the one and only cause for divorce. That dissolved the bond, annulled the contract, left the innocent party free to marry. Paul said widowers and widows might marry if they wished, and in writing to Timothy he urged young widows to marry. Every social and domestic question could be settled amicably and

righteously by applying the rules laid down, or the principles enunciated, by Paul to the Corinthians.

Gluttony is bestial. It perverted and desecrated the Lord's Supper at Corinth. Paul had passed on to them this rite which he received from the Lord. It was instituted to help feeble, forgetful, discouraged, doubting disciples to remember Jesus. "Remembering Jesus" is the end; "doing this" is the means. The Corinthians made the Supper a social meal. Every one reached for food, some went hungry, and some got drunk. They would have to answer for that, it was a sin against the body and blood of the Lord. He who eats and drinks (mark it, all were to partake of both elements), without a proper sense of the body, broken and bleeding, does so to his own condemnation. Many who ate and drank were ill and infirm and a number even dead. Beware of perverting the Lord's Supper! The Corinthians were the first perverters. (1) By open communion with the heathen. "You can not drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot take of the table of the Lord and also of the table of demons" (I Cor. 10:21). (2) By partaking individually or in cliques. "But this makes it impossible to eat the Lord's Supper" (I Cor. 11:20). Paul excoriated them for their conduct in both particulars. He defined the Lord's Supper. "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is that not participating in the blood of Christ? The bread we break, is that not participating in the body of Christ (I Cor. 10:16)? "Communion" is a mistranslation.

4. Misuse and abuse of charisms. The church at Corinth was the most gifted of Paul's churches. "In everything ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance and knowledge; so that ye came behind no one

in gifts." There were gifts of miracles, healing, helps, governings, discerning of spirits, various kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy. These were the largesses bestowed by Jesus when,

> "He ascended on high;
> He led captive a host of captives,
> And gave gifts to men."

They were credentials to accredit the primitive church and were not intended to be perpetual. If one claims these charisms to-day we demand the proof. Let him be bitten by a viper and suffer no harm. Let him speak in foreign languages without studied preparation. Let him heal the sick instantaneously. Let him raise the dead. Christ's church was fully attested by them when it needed attestation. The Scriptures explicitly said they were temporary. "Whether there are prophecies they shall be done away; whether tongues, they shall cease."

The divinely bestowed special charisms in the church at Corinth were shamefully misused. They became a source of pride. Those who had received them looked down upon common-place Christians who had not. Pride in the proud begat bitterness and envy in the lowly. Furthermore, those who possessed these special gifts interrupted each other in the congregation until the unbelievers present thought them insane. Again, the sudden ability to speak in foreign languages was deemed more brilliant than the ability to interpret the Word of God for the edification of the church.

Paul informs the Corinthians that the various kinds of gifts are from the same Spirit and for

the common good. In the church he would rather speak five intelligible words which instruct others, than ten thousand words in a foreign tongue. The test of a man is whether he builds up the church or himself. His scholarship is buncombe if he parades it in the pulpit for self-glorification. It is desirable only as it informs and edifies the congregation. So with singing. Right here is where Paul said, "I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also." Singing of high-class music has a place in the house of God. So has evangelistic singing; but singing where the words are not enunciated is condemned by Paul and should not have a place in Christian worship. The rule for speaking and singing is the same, viz: speak and sing so the people can understand and be blessed.

The remedy for all these Corinthian defects, the harmony for these divisions, the adjustment for these disorders, the correction of these misuses, is love. The root of cliques in the congregation, of disorders in morals and religion, of pride in endowments, was a lack of love. Therefore, Paul delivers his peerless panegyric on love. He said to the Corinthian Christians, and he says to us: "Always seek to excel in the greatest gift, to walk in the way of life which transcends all others—the gift, the way of love." Paul so excelled and so walked. That is the secret of his ability to say such sharp things to his church and not suffer alienation thereby. They had such a place in his heart that he would die with them or live with them.

A preacher now with the temerity to write such severe sentences to a church as are found in First Corinthians would probably never be permitted to speak in that pulpit again. Preachers have erred

by adopting the severity of Paul's language and missing its spirit, its motive. He ended his indictment with a personal message of love, the only one found at the close of any of his epistles (I Cor. 16: 23). The pastor who loves his people beyond the peradventure of a doubt can say any needful word to them and retain their love. He can lead them out of their error. The pastor who does not love his people is skating on thin ice all the time.

5. Church administration. There are more hints, suggestions, and precepts on the government of this church than of any other in Apostolic times. (1) What is *not* intimated. The Apostle does not make the slightest allusion to any ecclesiastical authority with an origin and power independent of the congregation. His conception of the privileges of "Sons of God" was incompatible with ranks and orders. All were of equal standing and shared the responsibilities of control in the assembly. In fact, Paul never addressed ecclesiastical persons as those to whom brethren owed obedience as to authority superior to the congregation. The whole local church was responsible for the good behavior of the group and of the individuals.

There was no human authority outside the brotherhood. There were, to be sure, ministering officials, as at Philippi, but they owed their position to the assembly and were responsible to it. He never sent greetings to office-bearers as such, independent and above the churches. He never exhorted, advised, or mentioned an organization under priestly authority. (2) What *is* intimated? There were guidances or "governments," men who by their wise counsel steered the church as a pilot does the ship. Their "gifts" were for the service of all and they were

honored for their character and leadership. Stephanus was one such. It was not an aristocracy of rank, but an aristocracy of service. (3) What is *explicitly* said? (a) The congregation had authority in cases of discipline. This was exercised in the expulsion of a member (I Cor. 5:4f) and in his restoration to fellowship (II Cor. 2:7). (b) The decisions were arrived at by a vote of the congregation, the majority ruling (II Cor. 2:6). The accurate translation of "many" is *majority.* (c) The congregation prepared and dispatched letters seeking apostolic advice (I Cor. 7:1). (d) It appointed messengers to represent the church and gave them letters of commendation (I Cor. 16:3; II Cor. 3:1; 8:19). (e) The autonomous congregation was urged to settle disputes which ordinarily got into the secular courts (I Cor. 6:1). To sum up in one sentence: The meeting of the congregation was the one administrative body among the saints.

Paul found some things to commend in this church:

1. Their promptness in complying with his counsel. Titus conveyed the first letter to Corinth and joined Paul in Macedonia. He reported that he was cordially received at Corinth and comforted by the Corinthians. They grieved over their revolt against Paul, avowed their eager affection, their zeal for him, and made him to rejoice more than ever. They sorrowed over their divisions and disorders with a godly sorrow that worked a repentance not to be regretted. That repentance called forth earnestness, eagerness to clear themselves, disgust with themselves for having been "puffed up," fear of the apostle's correction and God's wrath, longing desire for Paul's presence, warm effort to appease him,

and a meting out of justice to the offending church member. Their reproach in this matter of discipline was completely wiped away. Their devotion to Paul was manifest in the sight of God. His private boastings to Titus about them were vindicated. He was able to say, "I rejoice that I have absolute confidence in you" (II Cor. 7:16).

2. Their readiness to coöperate in beneficences. It is a striking fact that the strongest argument for ministerial support was made to a church from which he received no support. Ministerial support is argued in II Corinthians 9 upon five different grounds: (1) The analogue of human conduct. (a) The soldier is supported by the government. (b) The vine-dresser eats of the fruit of the vineyard. (c) The shepherd drinks the milk of the flock. (2) The law of Moses. The ox that trod out the grain was unmuzzled and ate of that which he threshed. (3) Natural gratitude. He who confers spiritual benefit is entitled to material support from the beneficiaries. (4) Comparison with their own conduct. Other preachers had been supported by them; how much more claim had Paul upon them. (5) Temple service. The Jewish priests were maintained by the sacrifices of the worshipers. The conclusion is: "In the same way the Lord also directed those who proclaim the good news to maintain themselves by the good news."

Missionary reasons prompted Paul to support himself in Corinth. He waived his right lest his motive be impugned. A city where money was worshiped should have no pretext to say he was greedy of filthy lucre. The heathen must know he was seeking their good, not their goods. For similiar reasons our missionaries must be supported by the home

churches. After the work is begun the converts are instructed in pastoral support.

The Corinthian church coöperated in the great collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. That was a mighty, simultaneous campaign extending over one year. It was the forerunner of the Baptist 75 Million Campaign. It touched two continents, was participated in by many local churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia, was directed by competent leaders, was promoted economically and the funds were administered with scrupulous integrity and with signal ability. For all time I Corinthians 16:1-4 and II Corinthians 8 and 9 will remain the authoritative guide in the beneficences of the churches. The principles there set forth admit of application to all financial enterprises in the Kingdom of God.

We are concerned just now with the relation of the church at Corinth to that large offering. Several things stand out which are to their credit and for our instruction. (1) The church opened its pulpit to the collecting agents. Titus began the work. They gave him a cordial and responsive hearing. He returned with Luke in about one year on the same business. Paul was coming on the same mission later. Four visitors in the pulpit in a little more than twelve months and all of them "talking money" neither displeased nor hurt that church. There are so-called New Testament churches at present who have little in common with the practice at Corinth. There are pulpits as truly closed to the financial representatives of the denomination as the pulpits of the "high church" are to non-conformists.

(2) The church took the initiative in making pledges. Paul habitually boasted of Corinth to the

Macedonians—themselves good givers—pointing out to them that for a whole year the brethren in Greece had been ready. The ardor of Corinth inspired the greater number of Macedonians. Churches which will blaze the way for others, which will lift up a standard for others to follow, which will lead the way in great kingdom movements are the true successors to the church at Corinth.

(3) The rules for their giving were practical and of permanent value. Note those rules. (a) Systematically. On the first day of every week every one was to put on one side and store up in his home the money for the collection, so that whenever Paul came the funds would be available. (b) Proportionately. "As God prospered" was the measure—more equitable and productive than the Jewish tithe. (c) Voluntarily. It must be of "a willing mind." (d) Cheerfully, not grudgingly or of necessity. (e) Deliberately. It should have been thought upon and intelligently decided beforehand. (f) Sincerely. The contributors must first have given themselves. Money would come freely from the saved and dedicated.

These rules were enforced by strong and worthy motives: (a) The equalization of burdens; (b) the example of Jesus; (c) the law of the harvest; (d) the almsgiving of Providence; (e) an awakened chorus of thanksgiving to God; (f) the extolling of God by the beneficiaries of the bounty; (g) their gratitude and supplication for their benefactors; (h) the completion of a work well begun; (i) the maintenance of their honor by the redemption of their pledges; (j) the disgrace to themselves and embarrassment to Paul should they fail to pay their pledges. The impulse is strong to pause for

a practical application of these principles and motives. Let not the reader fail to make the application to himself and to his church.

The church at Corinth, while not a model, is unique in that it is equally instructive and comforting to the missionary laboring in densest paganism and to the pastor in a wealthy and wicked American city. Discussing the questions with Dr. George Green, medical missionary to Africa, he said: "Corinthians are unfailing encouragement to me. The material on which I work is not more depraved; my problems are not more complex. The gospel which saved them can save the Africans. The spirit which brought order out of the confusion and strife in Corinth can establish orderly churches in Africa."

From my viewpoint, as a city pastor, the study of the church at Corinth brings perennial strength and wisdom. It was an essentially modern community. Paul offered not a compromise, but an alternative. He poured forth on this sin-sodden city the treasures of his spiritual resources. To them he preached the uncompromising message of the cross; declared the mystery of the resurrection; described the nature and meaning of the Lord's Supper; insisted that the relations between man and man ought to be regulated on Christian principles; assumed a capacity for the best in the worst, and saturated his messages and governed his conduct by the greatest thing in the world—love.

CHAPTER X

ROME—THE RENOWNED CHURCH

Rome is the most interesting city in the world. Commercially, architecturally, geographically, politically, and religiously, Rome holds the hegemony among cities. It is unique in two respects: (1) It is synonymous with a vast political empire. (2) It is synonymous with a powerful religious empire. These general statements must suffice. Adequately to discuss this city would consume this volume. Gibbon devoted twenty years and five volumes to a treatment of the rise and decline of the power that headed up in Rome. Whoever can do so ought to visit Rome. Of all the places I have visited I fain would have lingered longest in Rome. However, the history-making events of this period did not take place in the forum, but in a private dwelling, rented and occupied by a Christian prisoner. As Paul, in his letters, ignored, by choice, the palaces and temples, the tramp of troops and the pomp and splendor of Nero's court, so do we, from necessity of space, pass by these fascinating subjects and hasten to that in Rome which most concerns us in this discussion, viz: the primitive church.

1. Obscure origin. Obscurity envelops the founding of the church in Rome. Sojourners from Rome were present at Pentecost, but the church was hardly founded by them. They may have won some disciples, but the Gentile character of the church is against the theory that they founded it. There is not a scintilla of evidence in the New Testament

that Peter founded the church or that he was ever in the city. The tradition that Peter established the church, moreover, is contrary to the known facts in the New Testament. (1) Peter was not the apostle to the uncircumcision (Gal. 2:7f). This was a church of the uncircumcision. It was more likely that Cornelius established the church than Peter. Indeed, Peter was not aggressively missionary, and if he organized a church anywhere the inspired history is silent upon the subject. (2) Peter disappears from authentic history at Antioch, A.D. 52, where he was censured by Paul for his fear of the Judaizing party, which led him to inconsistent conduct toward the Gentile converts. That last view is not very favorable to the theory that Peter organized the church in Rome.

(3) Peter's own epistles disprove the papal tradition that he organized this church. They were not addressed to or from Rome. They are incompatible with the Roman Catholic position. (a) The only cornerstone of the church is Christ (I Peter 2:16). (b) Christ is the "shepherd and overseer" of souls (2:25). (c) The elders are Peter's equals (5:1). (d) He exhorts these elders to tend the sheep without exercising lordship and never mentions a peculiar authority over the flock conferred on him by Christ (5:2f). He is conscious of no more authority over these men than Paul had over the Ephesian elders who were appointed, as these were, by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). (e) He alludes to the transfiguration and does not deem the incident about the keys of sufficient importance for mention (II Peter 1:16f). (f) He appeals to the writings of "our beloved brother Paul" for confirmation of his teaching (3:15). (g) He begins his last letter,

"Simon Peter." The remembrance and consciousness of his frailty and fallibility sound in that word "Simon." (h) He designated the whole company of worshipers "a holy priesthood" (I Peter 2:5), a "royal priesthood" (2:9). Christianity is a kingdom of priests where every believer possesses competency to act for himself in religion and enjoy access to God through the one Mediator, the God-man, Christ Jesus.

(4) Paul's epistles disprove the papal tradition. If Peter was the founder or bishop of the church, or if he was in Rome at the time Paul wrote Romans from Corinth, or at the time he wrote from Rome to the churches at Colosse, Ephesus and Philippi, and to the individuals, Philemon, Timothy and Titus, it is inconceivable that Paul would not have alluded to the fact in some way. Here is one letter addressed to the saints in Rome and here are seven letters written from Rome to the saints elsewhere and not a reference to Peter in any of them. This is more than an argument from silence. Paul sends salutations to twenty-six people in Rome by name and to others who are identified but not named. It is incredible that he should not have saluted Peter had Peter been in Rome. Paul sends from Rome to the churches and individuals the salutations of seventeen people by name and of others differently identified. If Peter was in Rome was not Paul's failure to refer to him inexcusable neglect? Was Paul guilty of intentionally ignoring Peter, or was it an inadvertence, or was it amnesia? Such questions answer themselves. The only rational conclusion is that Peter was not the founder of the church and was not in Rome during this time.

(5) Luke's writings in the Acts disprove the

papal tradition that Peter founded the Roman Church. He tells of Peter and his work in Jerusalem, Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, Cæsarea, Antioch, and never a word about Peter being in Rome. The phrase "going through all parts" (Acts 9:32) taken in its context cannot possibly be stretched to include Rome. The "all parts" were the territory traveled in the brief time between Jerusalem and Lydda. A visit of Peter to Rome, the constitution of a church there by the distinguished apostle, would have been events of the first historical importance. The accurate and painstaking Luke would not have let it escape him.

Dionysius of Corinth (171 A.D.) is the first writer who explicitly connects Peter with the planting of the church at Rome. He couples Peter and Paul in founding the church at Rome as they had done previously the church at Corinth. Now, Peter had nothing to do with planting the church at Corinth, though some of his partisans came there after Paul founded it. Nor did Paul participate in planting the church at Rome. These are two errors, and the statement that Peter collaborated in founding the church at Rome is another error. Three errors in one statement show a carelessness as to facts that discredits the author. Able Protestant scholars like Sanday and Neander are willing to concede the presence and death of Peter in Rome at some uncertain date. I find no satisfactory evidence for his presence there at any time. Even if he did visit the city and die there it is as certain as inspiration that he did not plant the church.

The only possible justification in the inspired records for locating Peter in Rome is the word "Babylon" in I Peter 5:13. That word appears

in the salutation of a plain book of prose—not poetry or prophecy. Revelation uses Babylon as a symbol for Rome, but Revelation is written in symbolical and prophetic language. It would be incongruous for Peter to use a symbolic term, belonging to an apocalyptic vision, in the simple words of a salutation. Those who read the epistle would not understand the symbolic term unless they had previously become acquainted with the book by John, in which the symbolism occurs. There was a Jewish population in Babylon and it was perfectly natural that Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, should be among them. The order in which the Asiatic provinces are named (I Peter 1:1), from east to west, favors the literal Babylon. Why did not Paul who, we know, wrote five, and possibly seven, letters from Rome use Babylon a single time? The Lord told Paul three times that he was to see Rome. He told Peter how he was to die, but never hinted Rome as the place to him.

Neither was Paul in person the founder of the church in Rome. He announced a purpose to see Rome about the time he left Ephesus in the year 57 (Acts 19:21). He had never visited Rome at the time he wrote the book of Romans from Corinth in the year 58 (Rom. 1:10), after the church had been in existence perhaps for some years. Often and long he had wished to go to them (1:13). Many times he was hindered from carrying out his desires (15:22). The vastness of his field of labors and the knowledge that the gospel had already struck root in Rome had kept him hitherto from visiting the capital (15:23). He intends to go to Spain and hopes to see the brethren in Rome in passing through (15:24). They are requested to pray that he "may

come in joy to them (you) through the will of God" (15:31f). Therefore, Paul did not establish the church, he himself being the witness. He left Rome after his first trial. The idea of permanent papal primacy existing in Rome is contradicted by all the known facts.

Who, then, did establish the church in Rome? Answer: In all probability the converts and fellow-helpers of Paul's ministry in Asia, Macedonia and Achaia were the evangelists who carried the good news to the Gentile Romans and started the church in the then world's capital. Such an explanation is consistent with the known facts. (a) Much travel went on in those days. Splendid roads facilitated travel. The prestige of Rome drew travelers from afar. It was the most frequented of all the cities of the empire. The ease, safety, and rapidity of travel over the greater part of the Roman empire surpassed anything prior to the nineteenth century. Movement and circulation of people were unprecedentedly free. Roman officials and troops were constantly going and coming to and from the provinces. A constant stream flowed from the eastern provinces to Rome drawn by commerce, politics, pleasure and every motive of ambition and service. There were undoubtedly Christians among these crowds. Inevitably, converts from Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus—the three cities where he spent the longest time—would go to the metropolis. Did we have no definite data this situation is a strong presumptive argument for a church promoted by Paul's converts.

(b) Certain converts and fellow-workers of Paul's elsewhere were in Rome the first time we have evidence of a Christian group being in that city. Epaenetus, the first convert under Paul's ministry in

the province of Asia of which Ephesus was the capital, was there (Rom. 16:5). Aquila and Priscilla were presumably converted under Paul in Corinth on his second journey and on the third journey when he reaches Corinth again they are in Rome and a church meets in their house (vs. 3-5). Mary, one of the six of this name in the New Testament, who had bestowed much pain and effort on Paul in a definite past period, is there (v. 6). Andronicus and Junia, who had shared one of his imprisonments, are there. They were known and honored by the apostles and were Christians before Paul was (v. 7). Amplias, for whom Paul had a distinctly Christian love; Urbane, who assisted Paul in apostolic work, and Stachys, his beloved, were there (vs. 8, 9). Apelles, a tried believer who had been tested and found true, was there (v. 10). Converts from Aristobulus' household, possibly slaves, were there (v. 10). Herodion, the third of his fellow-countrymen mentioned in this sixteenth chapter, was there (v. 11). Three noble Christian women whom Paul had learned to appreciate in other days are there. Tryphena and Tryphosa were still engaged in the work of the Lord while the aged Persis was disabled. Speaking of the men, Paul says, "My beloved," but delicately omits the pronoun before the name of Persis (v. 12). Rufus, whose mother's exceeding kindness had so endeared her to Paul that he thinks of her as his mother also, is there (v. 13). Possibly a second house-church is there, of whom the best known members were five names familiar to Paul (v. 14). Possibly a third house-church is there, of whom five well-known members, three men and two women, are known to Paul (v. 15). At any and all events there

are certainly enough of Paul's fellow-workers and former members in Rome in the year 58 to account for the house-churches and the central, local church there. Indeed, these Christians would naturally and inevitably form themselves into a church. They were sufficiently numerous and zealous. The natural thing for them to do was to organize a church.

2. Mixed membership. The church was composed of Jews and Gentiles with a predominance of the Gentile element. Jews from Pontus and Tarsus were representatives of a considerable number of their race who belonged to this church. Baur is extreme in his claims of a Jewish membership comparable to that in Galatia. He dwells too much on the Jewish-sounding argument. It is enough to say that a creditable proportion of the church were Jews. Paul had them in mind when he said: "I speak to men who know the law." They were in a minority and Paul asks that they be treated with consideration. They were turbulent and needed to be warned to keep the peace. They had scruples about keeping days and it was necessary to advise those whose faith was robust not to despise the scrupulous and *vice versa*.

However, the Gentiles were in a majority. They included Latins like Julia and Greeks like Olympas. Broadly speaking, it was a Gentile church. This is evident from Romans 11:13: "But I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry." Furthermore, Paul numbers this church among the Gentile churches (1:5-7); deduces his obligation to preach to them from his mission to the Gentiles (1:13-15), and apologizes for his earnestness by an appeal to

his commission to act as a priest who presents the Gentiles on the altar as an offering to God (15: 14-16).

The chasm which separated these two races was wider than that which divides the whites and blacks in the South. Grace bridged that chasm. Christ pulled down the middle wall of partition in Rome. Jew and Gentile, master and slave, cultured and uneducated, high and low, were on a religious equality in that Christian society. In the days of the old South similar conditions obtained. Two-thirds of the membership of the church of which I am pastor were negroes in the forties of the last century. The church of which my mother was a member in Texas had on its roll a colored woman—Aunt Mutta. I can see her mellow countenance now as she sat in her seat regularly in the house of God, respected and loved by every white member of the church.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" portrayed to the world a perverted and false picture of the relations generally between the two races in the South. There are two graves at Lexington, Virginia, which I wish all men could see. Lexington is noted as the burial place of our two immortal and stainless chieftains, our twin heroes of constancy and courage, Lee and Jackson. Lee's body rests in the Memorial Chapel of Washington and Lee University. Jackson's remains are in the cemetery. On the left of the gate as you enter that cemetery is the grave of a white man, over which is a marble slab on which is inscribed: "Erected to his memory by his former slave." Just up the walk, on the right and under the shadow of Jackson's monument, is the grave of a colored man in the lot of a white family, and over that grave is a monument on which is inscribed: "He was loved,

honored and trusted by three generations." No one would bring back slavery; but if I could reach into the past and bring back the mutual love and respect between the Christians of both races in the South I could die in peace.

3. Social standing. Among the mixed membership were those of education and rank. Philologus was a Greek with a degree of culture. Paul announced his readiness to preach the gospel in Rome to the cultured and educated as well as the uncouth and uneducated. In general the experience of early Christianity was that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" were saved. Rome was an exception to the rule. Paul was going there to pay his gospel debt to "the wise" as well as to "the foolish." He informed the Philippians that an impression for Christ had been made in all the Praetorium. Saints from Cæsar's household joined him in salutations. Pomponia Graecina, wife of Aulus Plantius, the conqueror of Britain and a member of the highest society, was a Christian. In the year 57 she was sent to her husband and relatives to be tried for the "foreign superstition" and was acquitted. The second man in the empire, Flavius Clemens, confessed Christ before the end of the first century. Thereafter, it is probable that Christian senators were always members of the church. A universal gospel proclaimed in the universal city reached those in high station. The hungriest, most impoverished and most neglected souls in a community are frequently the rich and élite. Our gospel has a message for them. They need the comfort, salvation and idealism of Christ. We wrong them, hurt the kingdom and dishonor our Lord, when we leave them unreached and unshep-

herded. The church which does so lends credence to Celsus' scorn.

4. Developed doctrine. This church was well advanced in spiritual understanding (Rom. 1:12; 15:14f). It was no insincere compliment, though it was a specimen of consummate tact, when Paul says they may comfort, cheer and help him. His contemplated visit would be mutually beneficial (Rom. 1:11f). No other church was sufficiently developed in the mysteries of the faith to render such reflex service to the apostle. Apart from Paul's teaching, they were filled with all knowledge and competent to instruct one another. Christian commonplaces were out of place in a letter to them. Fundamental doctrines—His deity and atoning death—are known and accepted. Hence these elemental and essential truths, stated and proved elsewhere, are assumed.

The presence of Aquila and Priscilla largely accounts for the indoctrination of these believers. They had expounded to a gifted young preacher in Ephesus the way of God more perfectly. They used every opportunity in Rome to instruct and edify the saints. The saints were prepared to appreciate a document which fathoms greater depths of doctrine than had been sounded before. We are more prone to take too much than too little knowledge for granted by a congregation. The church at Rome, however, has its successors in churches here and there, well rounded and deeply rooted in doctrines. An evangelist was conducting services in such a church. Evidently he came from an environment hostile to the first principles of Christianity. He preached several days to prove that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, that the whale swallowed Jonah, that the Bible was inspired. The people were respectful,

but eager for something different. He inquired of the pastor: "What is the trouble with my sermons? I do not seem to be getting anywhere." The pastor answered kindly: "This church does not need to be convinced on the subjects you have presented. Scarcely one of them disbelieves. In this pulpit you may safely take for granted the things you have so ably argued." He did so and a gracious awakening resulted.

5. Famous faith. Their faith, their Christianity, was proclaimed through the whole world (1:8). This reference doubtless is only to the intercourse between Christians and, to be sure, is limited to the then known world. Whittled down to a minimum, the meaning is that Christianity was thus early (58) widely diffused, and was known wherever Christianity had spread the character of this church. Thessalonica became a pattern to all the believers throughout Macedonia and of Greece (I Thess. 1:7). Philippi was an inspiring example in liberality to the churches in the Peloponessus (II Cor. 8:1-7). Corinth's forwardness in coöperation was Paul's habitual boast among the churches in northern Achaia (II Cor. 9:2f). The reputation of the church in Rome was more extensive than any or all of these. It was a thing of general interest and notoriety among all the followers of Jesus, not only where Paul had evangelized, but also where the apostles and converts from Pentecost had evangelized. In Palestine and Egypt, in Greece and Rome, the faith of this church was talked about. It was the world-renowned church.

Situated in the world's capital, its opportunity to be known was better than that of any other church. "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." Travelers from

every quarter of the empire went to Rome. Christians among them would meet and converse with their brethren in Rome. Returning to their homes, they would convey to others information about the church in Rome. City churches, particularly in the commercial and governmental cities, are visited in the course of a few years by brethren who take away favorable or unfavorable impressions and reports.

Paul was discriminating in his judgments. He corroborates the opinion of his contemporary Christians about the church at Rome. Let me convey his thought by paraphrasing the first clause of Romans 15:14: "I myself also have the well-grounded conviction of you, as a body of believers, that you are brimful of *excellence.*" He used the same word (Gal. 5:22) in enumerating the fruits borne by the Spirit; also (Eph. 5:9) in contrasting light and darkness where the effect of the light is seen in every kind of excellence; also in II Thessalonians 1:11, where he prays God to gratify their desire for what is excellent. Paul was a big man—big in the truest sense, in sympathy, in appreciation, in magnanimity, and in heart. He thanked God through Jesus Christ for a church more distinguished than any of his own; he unceasingly mentioned them in his prayers. He was great enough to rejoice in the existence of a church whose reputation outstripped that to which he was then preaching.

Paul's arrival in Rome, as a prisoner, three or four years later, enhanced the reputation of that church. The whole city talked about the prisoner and his approaching trial. Letters were dispatched by him to Christians in the east. The star of influence which moved from Jerusalem to Antioch now

moved to Rome. Henceforth that church has the leadership.

6. Revealed righteousness. This renowned church furnished Paul the opportunity for the longest, most logical and forceful of his epistles. He knew he had not attained unto perfection and neither had they. Enlightened though they be, he could impart to them some spiritual gift. Eventually arrived in Rome he paid his debt in the gospel first to the Jews. They admitted that this sect was spoken against wherever the Jews met. They took their final leave of Paul in a way consistent with their national psychology and as predicted by Isaiah—hearing they did not understand, seeing they did not perceive, deaf and blind they would not be healed. For fully two years in a hired house of his own, without let or hindrance, he preached the kingdom of God and taught the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Prior to that delayed oral discourse, Paul communicated to them in writing advanced theological views, which are as fresh and appropriate now as the timely editorials, not yet dry from the press of America's greatest daily newspaper.

The theme of his letter is a revealed righteousness. The theme is unfolded in the plan of salvation (1:18—8:39) and the practical bearing of the truths of salvation upon choice, life and conduct (9:1; 15:13). All in the epistle from the end of the personal items (1:15) to the beginning of the concluding personal items (15:14) can be grouped either under the unfolding of the plan or the application of the principles.

1) The unfolding of the plan (1:18; 8:39). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, universally available through faith. That is, the good news

is the dynamic of God: (1) Whose intent is salvation; (2) whose extent is "every one;" (3) whose condition is faith. Salvation is treated in a twofold aspect, justification and sanctification.

(1) Justification (1:18; 4:25). (a) It is not by legalism, for guilt and condemnation are universal. The wrath of God abides upon the Gentiles because they refused the light given to them in conscience and nature, and sank into deep depravity. The judgment of God is upon the Jews in proportion to their superior light in the Scriptures. They obeyed not the spirit of the law, incurred additional guilt in teaching what they did not practice, substituted circumcision of the flesh for circumcision of the heart, and like the Gentiles are under sin and had missed the purpose of the law which was to convict of sin. Therefore, legalism as a method of justification is a failure. (b) It is by grace through righteousness of faith, available alike to Jews and Gentiles. The character of this method is witnessed by the Old Testament, is apart from law, is through faith, is available to all, is needed by all, and is distinctly a free gift. The highest expression of this grace is the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. God provided the propitiation in such a manner as to reconcile His righteousness and the sinner's justification. The plan condemns Jewish pride and exclusiveness and is confirmed by the Scriptures and, particularly, by the case of Abraham.

(2) Sanctification (5:1; 8:39). (a) Salvation, as based upon this method of justification, is completed in sanctification. It is by faith. The beneficiaries of such a gift should appreciate their state and be confident of its consummation. God's trying means of discipline should be embraced gladly. The

completion of our salvation in sanctification is assured by Christ's sacrifice for us as rebels. It is assured, further, by the superiority of the redemption in Christ over the loss in Adam. (b) This method encourages not sin but its abandonment. It effects a change in personal relationship which involves a life of righteousness with Christ and death to sin. This is portrayed in baptism. (c) The law failed as an agency of sanctification. The believer is dead to the law and is in a fruitful union with Christ. The law was good but unavailing in producing good works. It aggravated the presence of sin. The only efficacy is in a personal relation to Jesus. Christ implants a holy disposition. His resurrection guarantees renovation and resurrection. The Spirit bears witness to the believers' sonship and heirship and prompts and guides to hopeful longing and righteous supplication. The elect of God, predestined to be called, justified, sanctified and glorified are in a blessed state of security.

2) The bearing of these truths upon choice, life, and conduct (9:1; 15:13). Paul grieves over the apostasy and consequent rejection of the Jews. (1) God was not blamable for the situation. He kept His word strictly according to His sovereign promise. (2) The Jews were to blame; for their rejection was caused by their self-righteous unbelief. (3) Their rejection was not complete. It was partial, temporary and conditional. God's wisdom and knowledge are supreme. They are exhorted to conduct becoming a Christian. (a) As a child of God (12:1f). (b) As a member of the church (12:3-21). (c) As a citizen (13:1-7). (d) As a member of society (13:8-10). (e) As one who expects the judgment (13:11-14).

In non-essentials no one has a right to interfere with another; but one is under obligation to self-restraint for the sake of others on the basis of love and edification. Well did Coleridge call this masterly argument "the profoundest work in existence."

7. Pitiless persecution. At the outset, toleration was the policy of the empire toward Christianity. The Romans interpreted Christianity as a phase of Judaism, subject to the discipline of the synagogue, but entitled to the protection of the State. Gallio refused to hear questions about Jewish law; Festus did his utmost to avoid similar questions; the Asiarchs interposed to prevent further violence at Ephesus; the recorder invoked the fear of Roman power to quiet and disperse the rabble, and the Greek magistrates at Thessalonica accepted bail in a case where treason was the charge. The Jews perceived that Christianity was not a Jewish religion. Alexander was put forward by them at Ephesus to exculpate them from any responsibility for the new preaching. The Jews were the first persecutors of Christians. Stephen and James were killed by them and many others imprisoned and beaten. Stated succinctly, the Romans did not persecute the Christians because they thought they were Jews; the Jews persecuted the Christians because they knew they were not Jews.

Just as soon as it dawned upon the government that Christians were not a Jewish sect, that one did not have to be circumcised to be a Christian, the Christians became subject to the penalties of an unauthorized religion. This change occurred between Paul's appeal to Cæsar, when the empire protected him as a citizen, and his second imprisonment when the empire persecuted him as a Christian. In that

interval of time the Roman authorities and heathen populace discovered that Christianity was a religion different from Judaism; that it was a sect and not a national religion. This discovery resulted in removing the shield of protection, extended a national system of worship, and placed Christianity in the category of illegal religions.

The manner of life and worship of the Christian lent itself to misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Their evangelistic zeal won converts, and proselytism was forbidden by Roman law. They organized themselves into societies and that was forbidden by Roman law. They held unlicensed meetings and that was forbidden by Roman law. They abstained from worldly pleasures and were thought of as being unsocial. They observed the Lord's Supper among themselves at night and were suspected of immorality. They used no images and were charged with atheism. They would worship none but Jesus and were thus irreverent toward Cæsar, later worshiped as a god. All this led to the persecution of the church at Rome. Jewish persecution was prompted by religious zeal or intolerance; Roman persecution was prompted by personal spite and by political motives—a desire to suppress a divisive, isolated, transforming religion. The church in Rome was growing too rapidly, and its influence prevailing too extensively for the comfort of the emperor.

The first marked enmity was the persecution under Nero. He was the adopted son of Claudius (the emperor who expelled Aquila and Priscilla) and married Claudius' daughter, Octavia. His reign began in 54 and ended in 68 by his suicide in the thirty-first year of his age. He was the last of the Cæsars.

Nero was popular with the masses. He who keeps down taxes is forgiven many faults. Nero did this and also ruled the provinces without oppression. He was something of a poet, a musician, and a reciter. His temper was that of a spoiled boy. His manner was that of a cabaret singer. His conduct was that of a clown. Rome knew immoral emperors, but Nero presented the phenomenon of an emperor utterly devoid of dignity. Bad as Rome was, the populace was shocked when the year after Paul wrote Romans Nero had his mother, Agrippina, murdered. She was a detestable woman and had poisoned Claudius; nevertheless, matricide is an abhorrent crime among even the meanest people. Repudiation of his wife followed the death of his mother by three years. Two years later, July 64, a destructive fire devastated ten of the fourteen quarters of Rome and left thousands homeless. The monuments of Grecian art and Roman valor, the trophies of the Punic and Gallic wars, the holiest temples and handsomest palaces were swept away in the holocaust. The voice of rumor accused Nero, probably falsely, as being the incendiary of his own capital. His conduct during the calamitous conflagration gave weight to the suspicion; he was heartless enough to play the accompaniment of the fire to the tune of the "Burning of Troy." Popular favor turned from him.

Nero, in order to divert suspicion and regain his waning prestige, accused the Christians of burning Rome. They had predicted that the world would be destroyed by fire. Were not these miscreants capable of attempting to fulfill their own prophecy by kindling the fire? So the masses thought. Therefore, Nero put the Christians in his own place as

culprits and tortured them beyond what even the Maccabees had suffered in the inter-Biblical period. Tacitus tells that the Christians "were dressed up in the skins of beasts to perish either by the worrying of dogs or on crosses or by fire, or when the daylight failed, they were burnt to serve as lights by nights. Nero had thrown open his gardens for that spectacle, and was giving a circus performance, joining the rabble in a jockey's dress or driving a chariot."

The charges upon which these Christians were punished were: (1) Arson. (2) Hatred of the human race. The people endorsed the punishment of Christians; but when Nero turned the executions into a vulgar pantomime of personal spite and vengeance the public abhorrence was changed into commiseration. Nero had overleaped himself, lost his following, and finally ended his miserable existence by his own hand. Persecution, once started by the state in Rome, spread throughout the empire. It was rampant in the province of Asia. Read John's brief letters to the seven churches for a sidelight on this persecution. There was "patience" at Ephesus, "tribulation" at Smyrna, Antipas was a martyr at Pergamos and John himself was exiled on Patmos. Paul, the most illustrious victim, was beheaded by Nero just outside the walls of Rome on the road to Ostia. The internecine strife had ended the earthly career of the intellectual and moral giant of the times. Thousands of Christians suffered martyrdom under this Cæsarean tyrant—the first and last of the Julian lineage to persecute the Christians. Galba, Otho and Vitellius successively rose to the throne, but their combined terms were only one year.

A new line of emperors—the Flavii—began with

Vespasian, the emperor of the simple life and law enforcement, who tried to rule by means of the senate. For one hundred years Rome was governed by good emperors, with only the exception of Domitian, and the people were prosperous and happy. Titus, Vespasian's son, destroyed Jerusalem 70 A.D. Domitian, his brother, banished his own niece, Domitilla, and put to death her husband, Flavius Clemens, his cousin and former colleague in the consulship, for no other reason than that they were Christians. They were both members of the church in Rome. Under Domitian's capricious terrorism the apostolic age came to an end. The sub-apostolic age began—the obscurest period of church history.

8. Heroic history. Transporting ourselves to Rome at the end of the first century and surveying the field of Christian progress, two facts are apparent and impressive. (1) the fortitude of the Christians. The annals of persecution reveal their heroism burning more brightly than the flames which consumed them in Nero's garden. Their inflexible constancy in the defense of their cause rendered them insensible to death and tortures. Not to speak of the heroism of later martyrs like Cyprian, Polycarp, Ignatius, Epagathus, Polycrates, Thraseas, Segaris, Carpus, Popylus, and Blandina, we may take the spirit of Paul as the inspiration of the Christians in general. Awaiting the executioner's ax, he was cheerful, even triumphant. Almost the last words we have from him are: "I am already being offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day." That

was the context in which he exhorted, "suffer hardship."

The heroes and heroines of the faith abandoned hope of living down the slanders, or of successfully appealing to the State, but they did not wince. They died in the confidence of their cause and in the appeal to a higher tribunal, an inerrant justice, an inescapable vengeance. Their heroism even outshone that of the Waldenses which inspired that deathless sonnet of Milton, descriptive of their wrongs and intrepidity, their sufferings and rewards.

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worship'd stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans,
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heav'n. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who having learn'd thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

(2) The wide diffusion of Christianity. Less than forty years after Jesus was crucified sufficed for Christianity to penetrate every corner of the then known world. Paul wrote from Rome that the gospel "was preached in the whole creation which is under heaven" (Col. 1:22). History presents no parallel to the rapid growth and wide diffusion of the gospel in apostolic times. Paul and his com-

panions traversed classic ground with the tread of conquerors. Cities of pagan worship, of classic learning, of commercial prominence and of political renown heard the gospel. Christianity seized the cities and overflowed into the surrounding towns and country districts. It prevailed among the most enlightened as well as the barbarous. This, too, in an illustrious age; an age celebrated in story and immortalized in song; an age distinguished for its constellation of poets, philosophers, orators, and statesmen; an age eminent for its inquisitive researches, its ingenious disputations, its vast and varied erudition, its bold speculation, its unfettered freedom of thought.

Apostolic Christianity, failing to satisfy the temporal ambitions of the Jews, containing an innate offensiveness to human pride, proclaiming a doctrine of absurdity to the enlightened pagan, offering no material rewards to its adherents, demanding the highest morals in its votaries, insisting upon an unworldly spirituality, devoid of every charm that would attract the vulgar, uncompromising in its opposition to false religions and philosophies, encountering the bitterest opposition and persecution from the Jews, and finally outlawed by the empire, moved out and on with silent irresistible force across seas and continents until the banner of the cross floated from the dome of the mistress of the world.

The infidel, Gibbon, in eloquent lines states an historical fact, for which, however, his five secondary causes fail to account: "While that great body (the Roman empire) was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of

men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigor from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the capitol." Instead of dexterously eluding or speciously conceding the supernatural element in Christianity, one wonders how a logical mind which contained the vast amount of information that Gibbon possessed could escape the conclusion and confession that this religion was of divine origin and power.

9. Corrupted church. Before the death of the last apostle, Christian groups were scattered over the country from Spain to the Euphrates. There was marked variety. No two churches were exactly alike. Jerusalem was Jewish and conservative; Antioch was Gentilic and progressive; Galatia was reactionary; Philippi was buoyant and warm-hearted; Thessalonica was dreamy and impractical; Corinth was engrossed and disturbed with internal problems; Colosse was ascetic and heretical; Rome was sane and heroic. Such diversity was inevitable where the environment was so different, human nature so complex, and thought so free. Paul showed no aversion to variety. He made no attempt to cast the churches in a common mold like tallow candles. Error which stultified his preaching, like circumcision, the denial of the resurrection, or the person of our Lord, the perversion of the Lord's Supper, personal immorality and corporate disorders, he did indeed endeavor to check; but he had little to do with the ordinary government of the churches.

The uniformity in faith and practice among these churches was even more remarkable than the variety of their features. They recognized Jesus as their

Lord, observed the two rites of baptism and the supper, professed obedience to His commands, participated in coöperative beneficences, exemplified fraternal equality among members and enjoyed autonomous government. Gibbon says: "The few who have pursued this inquiry with more candor and impartiality are of opinion that the apostles declined the office of legislation, and rather chose to endure some partial scandals and divisions, than to exclude the Christians of a future age from the liberty of varying their forms of ecclesiastical government according to the changes of times and circumstances." With Gibbon's statement of historic fact one must heartily agree; but one must dissent from his inference which, though substantiated by the course of succeeding ages, is without warrant in the New Testament.

The variations in the form of ecclesiastic government occurred after all the apostles were dead. The precedent and practice of Paul were too clear and strong for that change to take place at once. Paul never hinted at the existence of a cardinal, or pope, in Rome, or anywhere else. If Clement was bishop at Rome, we would never guess it from his letter to Corinth. Nor was there a bishop at Corinth. It is not Clement, but the local church speaking in and through that letter to Corinth. Polycarp was pastor at Smyrna and addressed "the church of God which is in Philippi" in language irreconcilable with the presence of a bishop among or over them. There is no trace of a bishop in Rome until after Hermas, though ere this there were bishops at Smyrna, Ephesus, and Magnesia. Internally, the New Testament churches were democracies founded on brotherly equality. "Call no man your father, for one is your

Master and all ye are brethren." Externally, in their relations one with another, the churches were independent and self-governing. To deny either of these statements is to fly in the face of the stubborn facts of the New Testament and of the known history of the years immediately succeeding.

How came about these variations of the New Testament polity? Since they culminated in Rome, though in a period later than the one to which this book is confined; and since they have turned the stream of church history in a different channel and poisoned the pure waters of Christianity, it may not be amiss to indicate how they came about.

The rise of the episcopacy, the incoming of the sacerdotal idea of the ministry, and the conception of the hierarchical system all belong to sub-apostolic history. The episcopate was created progressively out of the presbytery. It was facilitated by: (1) Belief that certain men were intimate with the apostles. (2) Personal eminence of certain bishops. (3) The transfer of the charities from the deacons, the originally constituted disbursers, to the bishops. (4) The necessity for concerted action against heresy. The "clergy" came to be deemed more sacred than the "laity" and the bishop a higher order than the elder or deacon. The episcopacy was, at its inception, a governmental arrangement. Sacerdotalism appeared at the end of the second century. The universal priesthood of believers was the belief and practice until then. From that time, sacerdotalism was added as one of the prerogatives of episcopacy. By the middle of the third century confirmation was the exclusive prerogative of the bishop. Hierarchy was founded on sacerdotalism and episcopacy. One man became the head of a

"universal visible church" outside of whose pale was no salvation. The seat of this hierarchy was Rome.

"The name Papa (Pope) applied elsewhere in the west as a title of honor to all bishops, and in the east as a special title of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria, became in Italy, as early as the beginning of the sixth century, the exclusive designation of the bishops of Rome." See History of the Christian Church, by Fisher, page 108. "The history of the Roman bishopric during the first three centuries is almost wholly enveloped in a cloud of legend which is only occasionally broken by a gleam of historic light. . . . Indeed he (Leo the Great, 440-483) may be regarded as properly the founder of the Roman papacy as a universal episcopate with the full sanction of the civil power. . . . Gregory (590-604), therefore, may rightly be regarded as the first founder of the temporal power of the papacy on Italian soil." See Kurtz' Church History, Vol. 1, pages 264, 269, 273. The utmost that a historian can say for the antiquity of the papacy is: "Far beyond the time of Pepin (eighth century) the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable." See Macaulay's Essays, Vol. III, page 304.

The reasons for centering the power in Rome are plain: (1) The city was the capital of the world. (2) Tradition said Peter founded the church and was its first pastor. (3) The bishop of Rome, because of his position and ability, was eminently influential among the Christians everywhere. (4) The church in Rome was large, representative, heroic and world renowned.

If they were going to create a pope they located

him in the natural and logical place. His functions were, at the outset, purely religious. The decline of Rome's prestige as a city by a strange combination of circumstances enhanced the prestige of the church and of the bishop at Rome. When the city's power became weaker in governing the State it became larger in governing the church. From long custom, people looked to Rome for laws and leadership. When the emperor no longer lived there and the bishop was the chief man in the city, men looked to him as an authority. Rome ceased to be head of the old pagan empire and became head of an ecclesiastical empire. All nations must obey the government of the Roman church in religious matters. Gradually temporal power was added to spiritual power, until the pope was the maker and unmaker of kings. The reformation gave that system a shock, from which, please God, it will never recover.

Let us imagine a person thoroughly familiar with the New Testament, but knowing nothing about the perversions of its teachings and the existence of the various denominations, arriving in a large city and setting about to find a church most nearly conforming to the Apostolic form. He would look for a group: (1) Performing together the acts of public worship—prayer, praise, preaching. (2) Doing so in simple form and spiritual fervor. (3) Transacting its business in the true democratic fashion of a little Greek republic. (4) Having two classes of officers elected by the membership because of special qualification for *ministering,* not *mediating,* and amenable to the congregation. (5) Admitting individuals to fellowship who professed faith in the Lord Jesus and were immersed as an act of obedi-

ence. (6) Celebrating the Lord's Supper as a memorial and symbolic act in which every member partook of both elements. (7) Observing no special holy days or seasons for "saints" or superstition, but cherishing the ideal that all time is sacred, all believers are priests and every Lord's day is "Easter." (8) Maintaining a separation in morals from the world, while living in the midst of the world. (9) Unentangled organically with the State, yet shaping the State by virtue of the purity of its doctrines and the character of its members. (10) Fellowshiping other local brotherhoods who share the same faith and hope, who trust in and live for the same Saviour, and who teach and practice the same principles. (11) Coöperating with like bodies in beneficences and missions at home and abroad. (12) Honoring leaders whose gifts and service give prominence to their worth and work, but acknowledging one Lawgiver and Head, even Christ, and accepting one guide book, even the New Testament. These are the marks of the New Testament churches and the sure signs by which the seeker may find the modern churches of the Apostolic type.

CHAPTER XI

CERTAIN OTHER CHURCHES

Doubtless many churches were constituted in New Testament times, of which there is no record. Acts and the following books do not purport to be a full and complete account of everything that was done after the ascension of Jesus; even as the Gospels describe in detail only part of what Jesus did in the days of His flesh (John 21:25). For instance, we know there was more than one church in Judea (Gal. 1:22), but how many, we have no means of ascertaining. There were possibly churches in Galilee, probably in Samaria, and certainly in Crete. A church was located in Babylon (I Peter 5:13) and it is reasonable to suppose there were other churches in the East. Egypt and Africa probably had churches, particularly in Cyrene and Alexandria. A comparison of I Peter 1:1 and 5:1-3 is conclusive that there were churches with settled pastors in Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bithynia of which we should not otherwise know, though Pliny, at a later date, does bear testimony to the many Christians in Pontus. A mere incident in the letter to the Romans conveys the interesting intelligence of a church at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth on the Sardonic Gulf. Phoebe was a deaconess at Cenchrea. She had been a kind friend of many, including Paul, and was going to Rome on a matter the nature of which we are not told, and conveyed Paul's letter to its destination.

BEREA

The faultless church. The situation at Berea implies a church. Berea was forty-five miles west of Thessalonica on the famous highway and about three hundred miles north of Athens. Christianity was planted in Berea, on the second general missionary tour of Paul, immediately after he and Silas were sent away secretly from Thessalonica by the brethren who wished to protect the Apostles from malevolence of the Jews. Paul and Silas, in conformity with their custom, went first into the synagogue and preached. The Jews were the chosen people under the old dispensation and the favored under the new. Always, not only with Christ and the twelve, but also with Paul, the first offer of the gospel was to the Jews. Here we meet exceptional Jews, exceptional in that way they did not prejudge the cause of Christ but candidly investigated it and assented to the truths supported by the weight of evidence.

The missionaries were laboring unhindered and successfully until the implacable and relentless Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea, stirred the people into a fury like a tempest-torn sea disturbed to its very depths, and made it unsafe for Paul. Silas and Timothy were not in such imminent peril, since they had played a less active part. Accordingly, they remained while the brethren sent away Paul as far as the sea, and a committee took charge and conducted him by water to Athens, whence they returned home with a message to Silas and Timothy to hurry and come to him. The entire record is contained in five verses (Acts 17:10-15). How rich the thought, suggestions and lessons in that brief paragraph.

I call Berea the faultless church. Its characteristics are most admirable. 1. They received the Word with all readiness. These open-minded people were ready to listen, even eager to hear. "Faith cometh by hearing." They were good hearers of the messages of Paul. "Blessed are they that hear the words of this prophecy." "Let every one take heed how he hears." Are you a good listener to sermons? Do you have the upturned countenance, the attentive eye, the receptive mind? Then you are an inspiration to your pastor. "Eloquent hearing makes eloquent speaking," said Gladstone. The speaker gets from the audience in vapor what he returns in showers. Members who do not look straight at the preacher with sympathetic eyes, who sit in church with head resting in their hands, may be listening or they may not, but they are certainly throwing a wet, cold blanket upon the speaker. Imagine a whole audience of such! A *blind* man *might* preach to them with enthusiasm.

2. They searched the Scriptures daily to verify the doctrine which they heard. The verb "searched" was used in Attic law of the steps taken by a lawyer to see whether or not an action would hold in court. It conveys the idea of examining and sifting evidence. Observe this instance of the right of private judgment. The Apostle's word was not taken for granted. Every hearer had the right, aye, was under obligation, diligently to examine into what he said and accept whatever was corroborated by the inspired Word of God; in the case of the Bereans, the Old Testament; in the case of the Galatians, the gospel.

The Romanists wrest a text from its context when they quote II Peter 1:20f against the individual's

right to read and interpret the Bible for himself. Obviously, Peter meant that no prophecy in Scripture came from the prophets' own prompting, or by human will, but men sent by God spoke as they were impelled by the Holy Spirit. It is evidence of the way in which we got our Bible, not an inhibition against reading it for ourselves. The Romanists do more; they contradict the positive commands in both Testaments for individuals to study the Word for themselves. Consequently they leave their people in ignorance of the Scriptures, except as they may learn them from the perverted interpretation of the priests. They bind private judgment under a yoke of priestly authority which stifles private opinion and enslaves the intellect.

We are told that the principle of private judgment produces infidels. If it were true, it were better so than to live in ignorance and superstition. But it is not so. Infidelity does not come from the study, but from the neglect of God's Word. Tom Paine's and Bob Ingersoll's writings display an ignorance of the Bible inexcusable in one who purports to be a student. Infidelity is born in the heart, not in the head. The study of the Bible produces faith, hope, love. "The entrance of thy word giveth light."

To be sure, the attitude of the hearer, or reader, is important. Opinions of the same sermon vary according to the attitude of the hearers as much as anything else. To illustrate: compare and contrast the curiosity of the Athenians and the candor of the Bereans. The Athenians devoted their whole leisure to telling or hearing about something new; the Bereans devoted their time daily to the study of the

Bible. The Athenians listened and criticized; the Bereans searched and found.

3. Many Bereans became believers. The result in skeptical Athens was mockery; the result in inquiring Berea was faith. Jews, more noble than those in Thessalonica, accepted Jesus as the Messiah. Perhaps they were the best examples of converts from Judaism. We could not say they were more enthusiastic than some others, but they were more reasonable and more stable. The veil was lifted from their eyes, they saw the light in Christ, and continued to walk in that light. Greeks, also, believed in the good news. The women, and probably the men, were of honorable estate, distinguished for their position, influence and wealth. One loves to think of these prominent Gentile women over against those prominent Gentile women in Antioch of Pisidia who influenced their husbands to expel the Apostles from the city. Paul had his compensations. So does every minister of the gospel. Some may turn against him but others will stand by him. It is profitable to dwell on the compensations. They keep one sweet and cheerful.

4. The Bereans protected Paul and sent a delegation to accompany him to Athens. He should not be hurt if they could prevent it. He should not be sent away alone. Trusted brethren should escort him to the coast. They should arrange for passage at their expense. All the way to Athens, they would go with him to be doubly sure that no evil befell him. Through the Aegean islands they sailed, 'midst beauties unsurpassed. Byron sang in Don Juan:

"The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace—
Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet
But all, except their sun, is set."

God be praised, the Berean spirit still lives. Far out in the country are Bereans who meet the preacher at the distant station, convey him to his appointment, conduct him to the station on his return and sometimes buy his ticket. In town and city churches are generous laymen who defray their pastor's expenses to conventions and on recreational journeys. I have known prosperous laymen who would never let the preacher pay a bill while on a trip with them.

5. The Bereans preserved the faith and polity so pure that they never needed a letter of correction or instruction. This is the natural inference from the absence of a letter to the Bereans. A New Testament epistle almost, if not quite, invariably bespoke a danger, either theological or moral.

This is easily illustrated in Paul's letters to churches. Witness the volatility and back-slidings in Galatians; the dim perception of the true nature of Christ and of the spiritual unity of believers in Him in Ephesians; the asceticism, liberalism and license in Colossians; the self-indulgent enemies of the cross in Philippians; the idlers and busy-bodies in Thessalonians; the factionalism and immoralities in Corinthians; the tendency to pride and unpatriotism in Romans. Witness the subjects treated in Paul's letters to individuals: kindness to a slave in Philemon; false teaching in Timothy; legends

and human maxims in Titus. Witness also the conditions deplored and condemned in the letters by the two brothers of Jesus: class distinctions and fruitless faith in James; ungodly perverters of the common salvation in Jude.

Witness, again, the five epistles by the Apostles of Jesus: cravings of the lower nature in I Peter; false prophets in II Peter; gnosticism in I John; the deceiver and anti-Christ in II John; the mischief-making and ambitious Diotrephes in III John. Witness, still again, the letters of Jesus to the churches of Asia: loss of enthusiasm in Ephesus; fellowshiping those who hold false doctrine in Pergamum; Jezebelism in Thyatira; formalism in Sardis; luke-warmness in Laodicea. Smyrna and Philadelphia have the distinction of not being condemned; but Smyrna was hindered by sufferings and poverty and the blasphemy of the synagogue of Satan, and Philadelphia was encouraged by promised exemption from impending tribulation. If there are any exceptions to my general proposition that an epistle is evidence of a danger, either theological or moral, Smyrna and Philadelphia are those exceptions. Yet, with these two churches there was a danger, though apparently external and physical. The letter to the Hebrews, by whomsoever written, bears witness to the presence of stunted babes in the churches.

But Berea received no epistle. It needed none. Timothy had nothing unfavorable to report about this church when he rejoined Paul at Athens. He was dispatched quickly to Thessalonica, for that church was not so securely rooted and grounded. He and Silas joined Paul again in Corinth. Conditions were still gratifying in Berea, though Thes-

salonica must have two letters to correct her misapprehensions. Paul undoubtedly visited Berea a second time. His heart must have rejoiced over their exemplary conduct and ripening character. Open-hearted people, with an open Bible before them, daily do not err in doctrine or stray in morals.

Numerous authors have written upon the seven churches of Asia. My original plan was to omit them altogether and confine myself to the broader, more fertile and uncultivated field of the great New Testament churches. Upon reflection, it appeared that the seven churches should be included for those who may not possess the books that discuss them. However, they call for no extended treatment.

EPHESUS

The passionless church. Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia, was situated at the mouth of the river Cayster, several miles from the open sea. It was on the main route from Rome to the East. Governors of the provinces of Asia Minor always landed at Ephesus. Once a magnificent city, the site of one of the Seven Wonders of the world, and called "The Light of Asia": it is to-day but "the quiet of a vast cemetery of the ancient days."

Christianity may have been planted in Ephesus by Jews from Pontus and Asia who were present at Pentecost. Or, it may have been done by Aquila and Priscilla. Apollos preached the gospel in Ephesus. Paul spent, in round numbers, three years there. He delivered a farewell message to the elders of the church in the year 57. That address sounded a warning which, had it been heeded, would have produced a situation different from what existed

when John wrote from Patmos. Five years after the address, Paul wrote perhaps the most profound of all his letters to this church as the representative. The last lines from Paul were written to the youthful pastor at Ephesus.

John, the beloved, spent his last years there and his body was buried on one of the neighboring hills. Dr. J. L. Campbell strikingly says: "Apollos prepared the soil, Paul planted it, Timothy cultivated it, John watered it, and God gave the increase." How highly favored was the church ministered to by these mighty men of God! Was any other church ever so blessed in its ministers?

John gives us a picture of this church a generation after the picture we saw in Acts. The church is outwardly quite orderly and admirable. It is at work, toiling in its efforts, patient in suffering, nonfellowshiping wicked men, rejecting false apostles, bearing burdens uncomplainingly, and unwearied in its service. The casual observer would speak very highly of a church in the twentieth century of whom all these good things could truly be said.

The Master who holds fast the seven stars and walks to and fro among the seven lamp-stands detects with His penetrating eye a fatal fault in the church. Its joy found at conversion was gone, its passion for the conversion of sinners was dead. The church had become, in Browning's apt phrase—

"Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

The fires of evangelism were quenched. That which made it irresistibly successful in the beginning was lost. Unless it repented and reproduced

its first work of evangelism it would cease to be a church.

Modern churches should be admonished and instructed by Jesus' words to this church. Ere they realize it, they may find themselves in the same situation. Services held with decorum; orthodox sermons delivered regularly; offerings to missions, education and charities; but no converting power. The outward forms remain, but that which gives life, growth and power is departed. To make a confession, that is what I most dread in my ministry. Paul said of the Thessalonians, "Work of faith . . . labor of love . . . patience of hope." John said of Ephesus, "Work . . . labor . . . patience." The faith, love, and hope are missing. These were the motives which made effective the work, labor and patience, and without them these are but sounding brass and clanging cymbal.

SMYRNA

The church of spiritual riches. Smyrna was a seaport city built on an arm of the sea which runs some thirty miles into the mainland. It was thirty miles a little west of north of Ephesus. A colony of Greeks founded the city earlier than 1000 B.C. For four hundred years it flourished. Among the seven cities which claimed to be the birthplace of the dead Homer was Smyrna. The Lydians destroyed the city about 600 B.C. It disappeared from the page of history until restored by Lysimachus 290 B.C. It became the most beautiful city of Asia and the most loyal colleague of Rome. Before the world war Smyrna's population numbered three hundred thousand, of whom two-thirds were nomi-

nally Christian. It is the one site among the seven to retain its importance and the church there, like the one in Philadelphia, is one whose light has never been wholly extinguished. "The language of this letter takes much of its coloring from local conditions," says Ramsay.

The church here, as indeed others of these southern churches in Asia, was probably organized during Paul's three-years' ministry in Ephesus. Polycarp, a convert under John's preaching, served as pastor and may be the minister, or "angel," in Revelation 2:8. He was burned at the stake on a Saturday, but whether in the year 155 or later is not definitely determined. Four score and six years he served Christ, his King.

The glorified Christ is introduced in a twofold character. (1) He is "the first and the last:" His deity and eternity. (2) He became dead, but lived through death: His deity linked with humanity, His eternity linked with time. "First," "last," "dead," "lived," were words that throbbed with comfort through the troubled air.

Jesus utters no censure against this church. All is commendation and counsel, as it is with the noble church in Philadelphia. He knows the pressure of persecution, pecuniary poverty and relentless revilings to which they were subjected. Satan turned the Jewish congregation into his instrumentality and those fleshly, but not spiritual, descendants of Abraham circulated libelous reports concerning the character and conduct of the Christians. Such vilification was believed by the pagan population and the property of the believers probably confiscated. Against the called out people of the living God, the Christian ecclesia, stood in oppressive opposition the

gathered forces of Satan, the Jewish synagogue. Wherever Christ builds His church if you look across the street you probably will see that Satan builds his synagogue in opposition.

Jewish hostility is called "a synagogue of Satan" in Smyrna and Philadelphia; heathen hostility is called the "throne of Satan" in Pergamum; hostility among church members is called "the depth of Satan" in Thyatira.

Things are not always what they seem. An illuminating parenthesis says the Smyrnean Christians, though apparently poor, were actually rich—rich in faith, in grace, in good works; rich in the hope of the gospel, in Christian experience, in answered prayers. Poor in the world's sight; rich in God's sight. Laodicea was rich in temporal possessions but poor in spiritual treasures. Smyrna was impoverished materially but enriched spiritually. These church members possessed the true riches that moth could not corrupt and thieves could not steal. Treasures of the heart and character are better than stocks and bonds. They can never be taken away. They are not conditioned by circumstance. Paul aptly describes them: "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things, dying, and behold we live."

Two gracious promises close this letter. Negatively: the overcoming one shall in no wise be hurt of "the second death." This is an expression peculiar to Revelation and is explained in chapter twenty, verses six, fourteen and fifteen.

"Oh, what eternal horrors hang
Around that second death."

Bodily death, the separation of the soul from the body, you may not escape; spiritual death, the separation of the soul from God, you shall not suffer.

Positively: beyond the gates of death the crown of life is awaiting the faithful. Crowns: (1) The crown of rejoicing (I Thess. 2:19); (2) the crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:8); (3) the crown of glory (I Peter 5:4); (4) the crown of life (James 1:12); the incorruptible crown (I Cor. 9:25). Here it means the victor's wreath won in the contest. "No cross, no crown; no pain, no palm; no grief, no gladness; no thorns, no throne." Jesus knew the trials and the triumph. Had they endured affliction, poverty, reviling? So had He. Did imprisonment, trial, death, await them? He had triumphed over death, the last enemy. He knew by His omniscience and omnipresence; but He also knew by personal experience. He had passed through sufferings more severe than theirs and found the gates of day in the darkness of the tomb.

PERGAMUM

The church of steadfast loyalty. Follow the jagged coast of Asia northward to the river Caicus and follow that river twenty miles toward its source, and then go four miles north and you arrive at Pergamum, the third site of the seven churches. It was situated on a high hill in Mysia, where Paul was forbidden to go when the Spirit was leading him to Europe. Commercially, Pergamum was insignificant as compared with Ephesus and Smyrna. The population never numbered more than thirty thousand and is now less than half that. Politically, architecturally and educationally, Pergamum was

preëminent. The Roman proconsul resided there. Temples to Jupiter, Minerva, Apollo, Venus, and Bacchus adorned the city. Its library of two hundred thousand volumes rivaled the famous one in Alexandria. Our word parchment comes from the name Pergamum, where the use of skins, instead of papyrus, for writing purposes was perfected.

Aesculapius, the god of medicine, was the patron deity. He was worshiped in the form of a serpent and the worship, like all such worship, degenerated into corruption. The State supported this heathen religion and punished with death those who refused to render allegiance to the State religion. Antipas, the pastor of the church, was executed for refusing to subscribe to the established religion.

Pergamum was true to Christ amid trying circumstances. Their pastor was slain, but the members would not be disloyal to the person of Christ nor deny His faith to save their own lives. Therefore, Christ will take care of them. He has the sharp two-edged sword, the symbol of discerning and executive power. That sword defends the righteous and smites the unrighteous. Satan's throne is in Pergamum. His synagogue was in Smyrna, but his throne is in Pergamum. The seat of the pagan university, of pagan cathedrals and of the pagan viceroy was the devil's throne. A mighty throne is Satan's with a vast dominion, a type of the personality and power of the devil. God's throne is loftier, His way is wider, His knowledge is perfect, His power supreme.

Environment affects life. On the whole, the church was loyal to the mission and method of Christ. A few members held the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. They conformed to

community customs and the church compromised by retaining them among its fellowship. Jesus rebuked the church for the broadness which covered heresy. Balaamism was the doctrine, born and propagated for greed, that God's people may consort, eat, and marry with the ungodly with impunity. "Partake of open communion with the heathen, eat things offered to idols, accommodate yourselves to your circumstances, in Rome do as Rome does, avoid narrowness, be one of the world, do the thing most popular and profitable," are modern enunciations of Balaamism. Nicolaitanism was the philosophy that a Christian is not under moral law. You are saved once for all, therefore do as you please. Grace abounds where sin abounds. Sin cannot invalidate a covenant. They taught in Pergamum what Balaam taught in Moab.

The whole church is bidden to repent, for it is more or less guilty as a body for holding fellowship with men whom the church of Ephesus was praised for refusing. If the church repents and does its duty the erring members may be reclaimed. In any event the church will be blameless. If it fails to discipline, impending judgment will fall upon the wicked members and the church will suffer loss. Choice had to be made between the church cleansing itself or Christ coming and making war against the unclean. Discipline, in such circumstances, is kindness to the erring.

Tenderness throbbed through the severest sayings of Jesus. It was so in the foretold doom of Jerusalem. It was so in the searching words about the traitor at the last Supper. It was so in His message to Pergamum. Hear Him follow judgment with mercy: "To him that overcometh, to him will I

give of the hidden manna." It is an allusion to the manna that fell in the wilderness. (1) It was divinely supplied. (2) It was humanly gathered. (3) It was fresh every morning. (4) There was a doubled supply on the sixth day. (5) It lasted through the wilderness journey. (6) The supply was ample to feed all the people. What does it typify for us? The word of God upon which we feed and grow strong as against the heathen feasts in which men partook and were destroyed. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" was the profound saying of Jesus when He was hungry from a forty days' fast. (1) God gives the word. (2) We must study it. (3) Every day. (4) It supplies our spiritual need. (5) Its truths are never exhausted.

The "hidden" refers to that portion of manna preserved in the ark of the covenant long after Israel entered Canaan. He that was overcoming should feed upon spiritual sustenance here and hereafter. Subtle temptations to feed upon the secret mysteries of nature assailed the believers. Christ promises those who overcome these temptations a better food, even Himself, the "bread of life." It is "hidden" as being unknown to the unconverted and comprehensible only through personal experience. One of Dr. Hawthorne's favorite sermons was on this promise of Jesus. This part of his text he expounded thus: "Spiritual food is called 'hidden manna' because the source of our spiritual life is invisible. 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' The outward effects of it may be seen, but the life itself is not discernible by any mortal sense."

Another promise: "I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no

one knoweth but he that receiveth it." In ancient times a white stone was used for four purposes: (1) To pronounce as acquitted one accused and tried. (2) To evidence that the holder was made a free man in a free city-state. (3) To bind a friendship between two who were separated by distance. (4) To designate the victor in the Olympic games. Justification, adoption, preservation, and triumph were its symbolism. "A new name written which no one knows but he that receiveth it," is a figurative way of saying that the Christian's experience is a thing entirely between the soul and the Saviour and, in its deepest sensations, incommunicable to any other.

Our Lord would have us learn from the church at Smyrna that orthodoxy is not enough. Orthopraxy should grow out of orthodoxy. Truth must be applied. Conduct must accredit creed.

THYATIRA

The church of increasing usefulness. Draw a line southeast from Pergamum at an angle of about fifty degrees with a straight line from Smyrna to Pergamum and forty miles in length and you strike Thyatira, an inland town built on a level plain. It was a military post. Trade guilds of bronze-workers, garment-makers, and dyestuffs sprang up and prospered. The description of Lydia as "a seller of purple" and Christ "with feet like burnished brass" has local colorings which the student can scarcely fail to notice. Lydia carried Christianity there from Philippi. Also, this town heard the word of the Lord that sounded forth when the gracious revival was in progress in Ephesus. The Son of God, as-

serting power and authority, seeing perfectly and understanding accurately, trampling down everything unclean and hostile, speaks to the church in Thyatira in words of commendation and condemnation.

From his brief message we learn all that is positively known about the church. (1) It was a working church. It was no social club, no mutual admiration society, no hospital for religious invalids; but an active, energetic, tireless, aggressive organization of the saints. (2) Its motives were deeply religious. Activities grew out of love, faith, ministry and patience. Love was a habit. Unofficial kindness abounded. Peace prevailed under pressure. Campbell Morgan quotes Milton as an exposition of this spirit.

"Yet I argue not against Heaven's hand or will,
Nor bate a jot of heart of hope,
But still leap up and steer right onward."

(3) Its works increased with the years. Ephesus declined in usefulness; Thyatira increased in usefulness. Time had broadened and deepened the activities of these brethren. Age did not dampen their ardor or diminish their efforts. "I know that thy last works are more than the first." (4) It was too tolerant of a wicked woman. Jezebel, whether the pastor's wife, as Dr. Carroll believed, or some other woman, or a sect, stands for the lowering of moral standards, the denial of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the grafting on to Christianity of the pagan philosophies, the destruction of the worship of Christ by mixing it with heathen religion, and the corrupting of the people of God by such stratagems.

A false charity sealed the lips of the saints against her. The church failed in this one point. They suffered one who called herself a prophetess to teach and seduce. They neglected to enforce the test of religious teachers: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone forth into the world. In this ye know the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not of God" (I John 4:1-3).

In Lydia we see woman at her best; in Jezebel we see woman at her worst. Spiritism, Theosophy, and Christian Science, the three great religious apostasies of the last half of the nineteenth century, were originated by women, viz: the Fox sisters, Madam Blavatsky, and Mrs. Eddy. (5) The indulgence of the church did not save Jezebel. It may have solaced her in a false security. Jesus says her day of grace has passed. She was unwilling to repent in the time allotted for repentance. Hers was not the sin against the Holy Spirit. Few people, if any, commit the unpardonable sin in our day. That sin is attributing the works of Christ to the devil. In the presence of Christ's miraculous works one was much more likely to be guilty of this sin than now.

Sinning away one's day of grace is quite different. It is the risk run by every unsaved soul who rejects a gospel invitation. God's spirit may cease to strive with him. God may say, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." Esau sold his birthright and though afterward his desire changed "he found no place of repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears." Jezebel crossed that unseen line that

marks the boundary between God's patience and His wrath. Her doom was sealed. She should perish amidst the very corruption she created. How solemn the warning against procrastination! Tennyson pictures the foolish virgins knocking at the door and vainly seeking admission to the bridegroom.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent;
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

(6) The forbearance of the church with this brilliant, unscrupulous woman imperiled others. Lot's lingering endangered his loved ones. Thyatira wronged itself, its members, its fellowship, and its Lord by permitting Jezebel to remain in its fellowship and propagate the "deep things of Satan." She was lost and unless her disciples repented they would share her wretched destiny. (7) The saints were safe. All around them was degradation, before the wicked was a fiery fate, but they were secure. They rejected the "deep things," the new teachings, as contradictory to the things divinely revealed. In this they are approved. Christ's revelation is

sufficient. He has nothing further to add and certainly Satan cannot supplement His revelation. Dr. Samuel Johnson commented upon the notions of a certain book that "what was new was not true and what was true was not new." (8) A glorious reward awaited the faithful. Hold fast the truth you have till I come and give to every one according to his works. Death is the reward of doing "her works;" deliverance is the reward of keeping "my works." I am coming again. Therefore, the things your finite minds made it inexpedient for me to tell will be made known. Mists will roll away. "I will give him the morning star." The stars sang together at creation's dawn. Prophecy was a lamp shining in the night until Christ, the day-star, appeared. "I am the bright and the morning star." Live in the light which you have. Wait for further light on life's dark problems. You shall have it by and by.

"Sometime when all life's lessons have been learned,
And suns and stars forever more have set,
The things which our weak judgments here have spurned,
The things o'er which we grieved with lashes wet,
Will flash before us, out of life's dark night,
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue,
And we shall see how all God's plans were right,
And what most seemed reproof was love most true."

SARDIS

The sleeping church. Sardis, the capital of Lydia, was thirty-five miles southeast of Thyatira and fifty miles slightly northeast of Smyrna. It

was situated near the river Pactolus, celebrated for its golden sands. Sardis was the ancient capital of the Lydian empire. Croesus, the richest man of olden times, and the last of the Lydian kings, resided in Sardis. When Cyrus conquered him, near the middle of the sixth century B.C., he took $600,000,000 treasure. Sacked by Antiochus the Great, later destroyed by an earthquake, it rose Phoenix-like after each disaster. Manufactories made the city prosperous. The art of dying wool was discovered there. A popular commercial mart was the site of the fifth of the seven churches. This church had but little to be admired and emulated. It is the first one our Lord blames before praising. The approval is scant. A few had "not defiled their garments," but evil was the habit of the others. Observe its delinquencies and the causes.

1. Fatal formalism. It was reputed to be alive. Services went on as in other churches. Orderly forms of worship were maintained. There were no accessions to the membership, no sinners were called to repentance. The body was symmetrical, but the breath of life that once animated it was extinct. Did you ever attend such a church? Nothing so much resembles a cemetery. As churches tend toward ritualism they lose the freedom of expression, the liberty of individualism, the pathos of touching appeal, the power of instantaneous conversions.

2. Fearful failure. May be the world thought well of this church; it had a name of being alive among men. Christ found not one perfect work. "Failure" was written over everything in that church. Before God's court of appraisal their best was below the standard. Weighed in the balances, Sardis was

found wanting. The church as it sees itself and as the world sees it is not the church as God sees it. His judgment is infallible and by it churches and individuals stand or fall.

3. Feeble footing. The church was almost dead, but not quite. It held on to life precariously. The foundations were shaking. Watchfulness was commanded. A strenuous effort was ordered to strengthen the remaining things which were giving way. "Hold fast" what remains; "repent" of your errors; remember the doctrines preached by your founders and revert to them; or a particular judgment will fall upon you suddenly and unexpectedly, like the coming of the Lord to the wicked servant (Matt. 24:48-51), or the death angel's summon of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-20). Jesus comes in many ways before His final advent.

4. Faithful few. A few names on your church register represent active and upright Christians. They have not defiled their garments, have not partaken of the community sins. Their characters are unstained by the defilement of the city and times. God had an "elect remnant" in Israel and He had a faithful few in Sardis. Notice their characteristics. They were: (1) The few among the many. (2) The spiritual among the worldly. (3) The pure among the vile. (4) The awakened among the sleeping. (5) The active among the inactive. (6) The living among the dead. (7) The saved among the lost. (8) The victorious among the defeated.

5. Future fortune. White robes awaited the loyal and true. Robing was the divine approval of the saints' character and works. Reference is not made to the purity of Christ, but to the purity of the Christian. The inward character of the undefiled

finds its ultimate outward expression in the investments of the white robes. The thought is to contrast "not defiled" and "white." "Not defiled" is freedom from disgraceful stain. "White" is freedom from all imperfection. Those who live uncorrupted lives shall have characters immaculate. The cleanly garment entitles the wearer to a spotless robe. The conspicuous color in Revelation is white—stone, horse, cloud, throne, robes. It is the emblem of purity, joy, victory.

The believing, faithful, and pure "shall *walk* with me" in happy intercourse and unbroken communion foreshadowed by their circumspect and spiritual lives in Sardis. Their overcoming is proof that their names are written in the book of life. Such as had only a *name* to live were never inscribed in that book. Only he with a living name is enrolled in heaven's register and he may be assured of his final and complete salvation. "I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels" is reminiscent of the wonderful portrayal of the judgment by our Lord near the close of His earthly ministry (Matt. 25:31ff).

How do we account for the deplorable state of the church in Sardis? What were the human causes of their pitiable plight?

1. Devitalizing malaria. Unless one has lived in a malarial region he cannot appreciate the enervating effects of such climate. Occasionally I go to low, miasmal sections. Drowsiness possesses me. Hours for sleep are too short. Preaching is largely by power of will. One must drive himself against physical and mental inertia. Now, my opinion is that the sleepiness of the Sardis church was due somewhat to climatic conditions. The sluggish Pac-

tolus almost disappears in summer. The Hermus, two miles distant, is the mosquitoes' habitat. Standing water breeds mosquitoes. The anepholes—the female—is the only known means of communicating malaria, and malaria is the most enervating disease known to medicine. Malaria so devitalized the great majority of the church members that they could not be revivified. Biologists cannot devitalize a plant or animal and revivify it again. The condition in Sardis was irremediable.

2. Deadening materialism. Paradoxical as it may seem, those malarial regions where churches doze and sleep are frequently the ones in which men are most absorbed in materialism. Weather conditions, crop prospects, possible profits, are the chief topics of conversation. Card playing, dancing, and all forms of worldly pleasure are the young people's delight. All this is detrimental, if not destructive, to spirituality. The richest man in the world lived in Sardis. He "set the pace" in the business and social world in the sixth century B.C. Standards for business and life were handed down from one generation to another. In the first century, the pursuits of the people were trade and pleasure. Pergamum was celebrated for its literary character. It had a library of 200,000 volumes which Antony removed to Alexandria. Sardis cared little for learning. Mammon was its god. Pleasure was its shrine. Alas, the deadening effects! A whole chapter could be written on the Bible admonitions against the love of money and the love of the world. Take two Scriptures from I Timothy: "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." "She

that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth."

PHILADELPHIA

The small church doing a large work. Philadelphia, twenty-five miles southeast of Sardis, was the smallest and least important site of the seven churches. This church corresponds to one of our mountain churches, for the village was situated on the flat summit of a volcanic mountain range. Insignificant, though it be, this church survived the other churches of Asia, and after the vicissitudes of the earthquakes and wars of twenty centuries still lives. Chapter sixty-four of Gibbon's *magnum opus,* page 381, tells the fate of the seven churches of Asia. Gibbon was amazed at the preservation of Philadelphia alone "saved by prophecy or courage." He moralizes: "Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect, a column in a scene of ruins; a pleasing example that the paths of honor and safety may sometimes be the same."

Our Lord, holy in His character as God, occupying an exalted official position, acting by His own royal authority, approves the record and guarantees the future of the church in Philadephia. Three kinds of keys are mentioned in the New Testament: "The keys of the kingdom"—the right conferred by Christ upon all the apostles and then upon the churches to state the terms of salvation. "The keys of death and hades"—Christ's power over the grave exhibited in His bodily resurrection and to be demonstrated finally in the raising of the bodies of the dead at the second coming. "The keys of David"—

Christ's prerogative to unlock the door of opportunity before a church.

1. Philadelphia, small and isolated, was honored by Christ with special privileges and opportunities. Access to the knowledge of the Scriptures, growth in grace, intimate association with the Lord, were their privileges. A field of missionary service at home and abroad lay open to these saints. Neglect had long since closed Ephesus' door, but Philadelphia's stands ajar, and no man could shut it.

2. Such honor is bestowed because the church is trustworthy. Small in numbers but genuine in life, this church of fine quality and meager quantity is strong in character. It rings true every time you sound it. They kept Christ's word and did not deny His name; they were devoted and diligent in a restricted sphere; therefore, they are liberally rewarded. Faithful employment of powers, however limited, is the path to promotion. The greatest rewards may not be for the largest churches; but for small churches which have made the best use of their strength. Remember Christ bestowed His highest commendation upon a small mountain church which did the most with the little which it had. This principle should govern our appraisal of churches in associations and conventions. The large ones get too much praise and the small ones too litte.

3. The Lord's favor upon the faithful shall convince their foes. Opposition shall be effectually overcome and humbled. The synagogue of Satan will yet recognize the church. The Jews will yet be brought to Christ and know that He loved the church. Until then tribulation is the lot of the church, but Christ will keep them in the hour of trial. Romanists read into the promise of Christ to Philadelphia

a sense foreign to what He said. They support "prelatical excellence" with this Scripture and demand the submission of the faithful to the prelates. Our Lord is not discussing the devotion of the faithful in 3:2, but the hostility of the hypocritical pretenders. Nor did the modest pastor of that mountain church dream that he was a prelate.

4. The best church needs exhortation. "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Your crown is at the end of the road of fidelity. Some would prevent your attaining it by enticing you into unfaithfulness. "I opened the door of opportunity. You entered that door. You have wrought well. The conflict is still waging. Keep up the fight and you shall have your crowning."

"Ne'er think the vict'ry won;
Nor lay thine armor down;
The work of faith will not be done,
Till thou obtain the crown."

5. A bright prospect before the conquerors. "I will make a pillar in the temple of my God." Yonder, in the perfect temple of our God the true Christian has an abiding and conspicuous place. He shall be so positioned that he cannot be removed while the whole fabric stands. "I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God." The redeemed bear a likeness to God and have the freedom of the heavenly temple and the holy city. Glorious is the future of the saints. Our Saviour all but exhausted metaphor in describing His attributes and in picturing the golden age when He comes to receive and reward His own. His promises are sure because His attributes are true.

"O! golden hereafter, thine ever bright rafter
Will shake in the thunder of sanctified song,
And every swift angel proclaim an evangel
To summon God's saints to the glorified throng.

"O! host without number, awaked from death slumber,
Who walked in white robes on the emerald shore;
The glory is o'er you, the throne is before you,
And weeping will come to your spirits no more.

"O! mansions eternal, in fields ever vernal,
Awaiting your tenantry ransomed from sin,
We'll stand on your pavement no more in enslavement,
With home-songs to Jesus who welcomes us in.

"O! the chorus of fire, that will burst from God's choir,
When the loud hallelujahs leap up from the soul,
Till the stars in the sky and the tears in the eye
Shall tremble with joy in the music's deep roll.

"O! Jesus, our Master, command to beat faster
These weary life-pulses that bring us to thee,
Till past the dark portal, we stand up immortal,
And sweep with hosannas the jasper-lit sea."

LAODICEA

The delinquent church. Laodicea, the easternmost site of the seven churches, was forty-two miles southeast of Philadelphia. It stood on the south bank of the Lycus river, an affluent of the Meander. Colosse was on the same side of the river, eighteen miles east and Hierapolis was on the opposite side, six miles to the north. How important a factor

have rivers been in human history! How many churches of the New Testament were on rivers! Some one may yet write a book on rivers and show their relation to religion and civilization. It is an attractive subject. The material is plentiful.

The city was named by its founder, Antiochus II, after his wife. Under the Romans, it rose to opulence and power. A merchant prince bequeathed 2,000 talents to the city for public purposes. Cicero cashed his bills of exchange there. When an earthquake destroyed the city, A.D. 60, the Laodiceans declined the imperial government's financial aid and rebuilt the city with their own resources. The boast of independent wealth was not idle talk. Furthermore, the city was noted for the manufacture of woolen goods and for a medicine for the eyes which was exported and sold over the Greek and Roman world. The language of the letter to Laodicea has a new interest when read with these facts in mind.

You may remember Laodicea as one of the three churches served by Epaphras and, in his absence, by Archippus. Paul knew about the church, referred to it four times in his letter to Colosse, and may have visited it after his acquittal on his first trial in Rome. At the time John was in exile on Patmos the church was so dilapidated that Christ, the finality of Truth, the faithful Witness, the Source of all life, sees nothing to commend.

1. The tepidity of indifference. "Neither cold nor hot" is the complaint. Better be frozen than lukewarm. Better be boiling than tepid. Jesus said so. Ice is palatable. We buy it at increasing cost. Hot water is the preferred drink of some. Lukewarm water is nauseating. Jesus was about to spew this church out of His mouth.

Churches without enthusiasm, sermons without emotion, individuals incapable of tears, are Laodicean. Such was the condition in the Anglican Church, where John Wesley kindled the fires of evangelism in which Methodism was born. Such was the condition in England when Cary launched out into the deep of the foreign missionary ocean. Both movements were a protest against the stolid indifference of a perfectly regular religious order. The Salvation Army is an organization more pleasing to Christ than many costly temples where evangelism is taboo.

2. The poverty of riches. Smyrna thought itself poor when in reality it was rich. Laodicea thought itself rich when in reality it was poor. Spiritual pride commonly attends spiritual degeneracy. Absorption in wealth is perilous to piety. Self-satisfied and self-congratulatory, the condition of the church was desperate in the sight of Jesus. "Wretched," pressed down with the burden of unconsecrated wealth. "Miserable," pitiable people, commiserated by the Master. "Poor," a spiritual pauper, surrounded by uncounted riches. The ancient mariner famished on the ocean.

"Water, water, everywhere;
And all the boards did shrink.
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink."

"Blind," near-sighted and devoid of vision. "Naked," no garments of praise, service, character. Jesus was sad, not angry, over the plight of this church. Neglect of Christ was the explanation of their state. He counseled them to buy of Himself gold, white robes, and eye-salve.

Why did they neglect Christ? Because they were engrossed in making money. It is a subtle, strong temptation. "If riches increase set not your heart upon them." The Christian accumulating wealth needs an abundant supply of grace to keep him humble and spiritual. John prayed that his friend might prosper as his soul prospered. Paul saw the incipient peril in Laodicea and prayed that they might have the true wealth (Col. 2:1-3). Disproportionate prosperity of purse over heart is calamitous. Jesus' parable on worldly greed vividly portrays the poverty amid riches. The man's soul was impoverished and in death he was a pauper. "So it is with him who amasses treasures for himself but has no riches in God."

"Carve your name high over shifting sand,
Where the steadfast rocks defy decay—
'All you can hold in your cold, dead hand
Is what you have given away.'

"Build your pyramid skyward and stand,
Gazed at by millions, cultured they say—
'All you can hold in your cold, dead hand
Is what you have given away.'

"Count your wide conquests of sea and land,
Heap up the gold, and hoard as you may—
'All you can hold in your cold, dead hand
Is what you have given away.'

"Culture and fame and gold—ah, so grand!
Kings of the solon, a mart a day—
'All you can hold in your cold, dead hand
Is what you have given away.'"

The pleading Christ is outside the church. Christ had been expelled from the church in Laodicea. Not intentionally, but inevitably by their conduct and course. He could not dwell among such as they were. On the outside He pleads with the obdurate. "Behold I stand at the door and knock." The common view of life is that the door is closed and we are trying to get in. This scene is the reverse. The door is closed and Christ is seeking admittance. He stands—not being admitted at the first knock, He knocks again. He speaks: "If any man hear my voice." The voice adds insistence to the knock. It also identifies Jesus. Ah, the marvelous qualities of the voice. The blind identify a friend of the long ago by the modulations of his speech. "And open unto me." Christ will not break down the door. Man must open it. God conferred no sublimer power upon man than freedom of will. Each one chooses his friends. The right to choose differentiates man from beasts; it makes man a man. Holman Hunt's masterly painting, "Christ at the Door," was criticized for not having a handle on the door. Said the artist, "That is not a mistake. That door has no handle on the outside. It is inside." "I will sup with him and he with me." Jesus promises and seeks spiritual intercommunion. He offers to be the host at a banquet in the delinquent church if one member will open the door and let Him in.

"Knocking, knocking, still He's there,
Waiting, waiting, wondrous fair;
But the door is hard to open,
For the weeds and ivy vine,
With their dark and clinging tendrils,
Ever round the hinges twine."

A RETROSPECT

Taking a retrospect of the seven churches in Asia we observe several features common to all.

1. Every church had a pastor. This is evidently the meaning of "the angel." These pastors are the ones through whom the letters are sent to the several congregations. To make them more than pastors is to add to what is written. We search in vain for a body of "ruling elders," or a hierarchy in any form.

2. Every church was local. Seven distinct localities were the sites of the churches. When the Spirit speaks to one it is "the church *in*" such and such a place. When He speaks to all it is "the churches" —always plural. The word is not used in a state, national, or denominational sense. There is no Scriptural warrant for the terms "Church of England," "Presbyterian Church," "Baptist Church," etc. We should say the "churches" whenever we refer to more than one local congregation. That is, if we wish to use the New Testament phraseology and to think clearly.

3. Every church was independent. Such a thing as one church having authority over another is not remotely suggested in the two chapters which contain what was said to the seven churches. Older and stronger churches had not the slightest control over younger and weaker ones. Not an allusion occurs to any kind of ecclesiastical authority outside of the church.

4. Every church had distinguishing features. Ephesus was orthodox but passionless. Smyrna was poor in worldly goods but rich in spiritual treasures. Pergamum was true in faith but false in discipline.

Thyatira was growing in serviceableness but lenient with error. Sardis was mostly dead but a few were alive unto God. Philadelphia was active but entering severe trials. Laodicea was lukewarm and sickening. These were seven contemporaneous churches with a diversity as marked as any seven churches in any given state.

5. Every church had something in common with the other churches. They had a common work. They were constituted and commissioned to shed light. Their light was derived from Christ, shining as the sun in heaven, and they were His light-bearers in the darkness of the world. They were to illuminate the world by evangelization. Failure to function subjected a church to rebuke, to judgments and to penalties. A church might even lose its existence. Faithfulness to the trust was recognized with signal rewards. Though a church died its converted members would not be lost. Note the case of Sardis.

6. Every church had one law-giver and executor. Christ declares His divine nature and supreme authority in terms appropriate to every church. The sublime imagery which he employs to describe Himself and His relation to the churches, asserting His authority and knowledge and confirming His promises, taxes the comprehension of the human understanding. His government over the churches was administered by the Holy Spirit, Christ's vicar. Seven times we read, "Hear what the Spirit says to the churches." It is as clear as daylight that no man was Christ's vice-gerent. Peter is never mentioned. Neither is Paul. Authority resided not in Rome, but in Christ, the head of each church. This authority was exercised on Christ's behalf by the Holy Spirit addressing the several churches.

7. The churches, functioning for Christ, were the agencies through which "the kingdom of the world is to become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ." "Imperfection" was written over most of the pastors and churches. They fell far short of the ideal. Yet, faulty and fallible as they are, Christ depends upon them to bring in His kingdom. He has no other agency. They must not fail. They shall not fail. By the merits of the blood of the Lamb and through the word of their testimony the churches militant shall become "the church triumphant." The church as an institution symbolized by a woman (12:1) becomes the church in glory symbolized by a bride (21:9).

We have thus completed the studies outlined in the first chapter of this volume. We began with Christ establishing an institution; we have studied that institution as expressed in numerous local congregations; we close with the church in glory, when the marriage takes place between the Lamb and the Bride at the second coming of our Lord. Let us work and pray for that glorious consummation. Let us watch and be ready when He comes.

"The dark stream of evil is flowing apace,
And man is still walking a stranger to grace,
While daring rebellion is on the increase,
Which mar not my joy, which disturb not my peace.
For my heart is engaged with its own happy song;
The Lord who has loved me will come before long;
It may be to-morrow, or even to-night,
That I shall behold him in unclouded light!

"The house, and the land, and the wealth in the chest,
Bring plenty of trouble, but never bring rest;

The Lord is my portion, and when I have grief
His rich consolation brings instant relief,
I list not to doubts that my reason may bring,
I trust to His mercy, and cheerfully sing—
It may be to-morrow, or even to-day,
That Christ will descend and call us away.

"The world in its wisdom may scorn and deny
The worth of the One upon whom I rely,
But from Him all blessing and holiness flows
And in Him I have the most blessed repose.
The night closes in, and the morn reappears,
And thus it has been for a number of years,
But still on the hill-tops of hope I would stay,
And eagerly look for the breaking of day!

"To-morrow may come with its sorrows and joys,
And the evil which often my pleasure alloys,
And still find the world with its poor little aim,
And the scoffer in nature and practice the same;
May it never find me looking earthward for bliss;
My hope is above, my rejoicing is this—
It may be to-morrow, or even this eve,
That I, for my place in glory shall leave.

"Adorable Saviour! by faith I descry
The long-looked for day of redemption draws nigh,
When the shame and contempt and grief shall give
place
To the holy rejoicings, the triumphs of grace!
Till we from this terrible desert are caught,
My heart would rejoice in this comforting
thought—
It may be to-morrow, or even to-night,
The fullness of glory will burst on my sight!"

CHAPTER XII

TABLE SHOWING CHRISTIAN MEANING OF ECCLESIA

The following table contains every New Testament passage where *ecclesia* is used with a *Christian* meaning, and indicates my interpretation of the three conceptions:

1. On this rock I will build my church (Matt. 16:18) ..... Institution
2. If he refuses to hear, tell it to the church (Matt. 18:17) ..... Institution
3. If he neglect to hear the church (Matt. 18:17) .. Institution
4. Great fear came on the whole church (Acts 5:11) .... Local
5. A great persecution against the church (Acts 8:1) .... Local
6. Saul laid waste the church (Acts 8:3) ..... Local
7. The church throughout all Judaea, Galilee, Samaria (Acts 9:31) ..... Local
8. Report came to the ears of the church (Acts 11:22) .. Local
9. Came together in the church (Acts 11:26) ..... Local
10. Put forth his hands to harm some of the church (Acts 12:1) ..... Local
11. Prayer was earnestly made by the church (Acts 12:5) . Local
12. In the church that was there (Acts 13:1) ..... Local
13. Appointed elders for them in every church (Acts 14:23) ..... Local
14. When they had assembled the church (Acts 14:27) ... Local
15. Having been sent forward by the church (Acts 15:3) . Local
16. Having been welcomed by the church (Acts 15:4) ... Local
17. The apostles, the elders, with the whole church (Acts 15:22) ..... Local
18. Confirming the churches (Acts 15:41) ..... Local
19. The churches were strengthened in the faith (Acts 16:5) ..... Local
20. Went up and saluted the church (Acts 18:22) ..... Local
21. Called the elders of the church (Acts 20:17) ..... Local
22. Shepherd the church of God (Acts 20:28) ..... Local
23. The church which is at Cenchraea (Rom. 16:1) ..... Local
24. All the churches of the Gentiles (Rom. 16:4) ..... Local

25. The church that is in their house (Rom. 16:5).....Local
26. All the churches of Christ salute you (Rom. 16:16)..Local
27. Gaius my host, and of the whole church, salutes you (Rom. 16:23) .....Local
28. The church of God which is in Corinth (I Cor. 1:2)..Local
29. As I teach everywhere in every church (I Cor. 4:17).Local
30. Who are of no esteem in the church (I Cor. 6:4)....Local
31. So I ordain in all the churches (I Cor. 7:17).....Local
32. Either to Jews or Greeks, or to the church of God (I Cor. 10:32) .....Local
33. No such custom, nor the churches of God (I Cor. 11:16) .....Local
34. When ye come together in the church (I Cor. 11:18)..Local
35. Despise ye the church of God (I Cor. 11:22).....Local
36. God set some in the church (I Cor. 12:28).....Local
37. He that prophesies builds up the church (I Cor. 14:4) .....Local
38. That the church may receive upbuilding (I Cor. 14:5) .....Local
39. To the upbuilding of the church (I Cor. 14:12).....Local
40. In church I had rather speak five words (I Cor. 14:19) .....Local
41. If therefore the whole church is assembled together (I Cor. 14:23) .....Local
42. Let him keep silence in church (I Cor. 14:28).....Local
43. As in all the churches of the saints (I Cor. 14:33)..Local
44. Let your women keep silence in the churches (I Cor. 14:34) .....Local
45. Shameful for a woman to speak in church (I Cor. 14:35) .....Local
46. Persecuted the church of God (I Cor. 15:9).....Local
47. As I directed the churches of Galatia (I Cor. 16:1)..Local
48. The churches of Asia salute you (I Cor. 16:19).....Local
49. The church that is in their house (I Cor. 16:19).....Local
50. The church of God which is in Corinth (II Cor. 1:1)..Local
51. The churches of Macedonia (II Cor. 8:1).....Local
52. Throughout all the churches (II Cor. 8:18).....Local
53. Appointed by the churches (II Cor. 8:19).....Local
54. Messengers of the churches (II Cor. 8:23).....Local
55. Show toward them before the churches (II Cor. 8:24).Local
56. Robbed other churches (II Cor. 11:8).....Local
57. Anxiety for all the churches (II Cor. 11:28).....Local
58. Inferior to the rest of the churches (II Cor. 12:13)..Local
59. To the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:2).....Local
60. Persecuted the church of God (Gal. 1:13).....Local
61. The churches of Judaea (Gal. 1:22).....Local

62. Head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22)..Institution
63. Made known through the church (Eph. 3:10)...Institution
64. To him be the glory in the church (Eph. 3:21)..Institution
65. Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23)....Institution
66. The church is subjected to Christ (Eph. 5:24)..Institution
67. Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25).....Institution
68. Present to himself the church (Eph. 5:27).....In Glory
69. Even as Christ the church (Eph. 5:29).....Institution
70. Speaking of Christ and of the church (Eph. 5:32) .....Institution
71. Persecuting the church (Phil. 3:6).....Local
72. No church communicated with me (Phil. 4:15).....Local
73. The head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18)..Institution
74. Sake of his body, which is the church (Col. 1:24).Institution
75. The church in their house (Col. 4:15).....Local
76. The church of the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16).....Local
77. The church of the Thessalonians (I Thess. 1:1).....Local
78. The churches of God which are in Judaea (I Thess. 2:14) .....Local
79. The church of the Thessalonians (II Thess. 1:1).....Local
80. Glory in you in the churches of God (II Thess. 1:4)..Local
81. How shall he take care of the church of God (I Tim. 3:5) .....Local
82. The church of the living God (I Tim. 3:15)....Institution
83. Let not the church be burdened (I Tim. 5:16).....Local
84. The church in thy house (Phil. 2).....Local
85. Church of the first-born (Heb. 12:23).....In Glory
86. Let him call for the elders of the church (Jas. 5:14)..Local
87. Testified to thy love before the church (III John 6)...Local
88. I wrote somewhat to the churches (III John 9).....Local
89. Casts them out of the church (III John 10).....Local
90. John to the seven churches (Rev. 1:4).....Local
91. Send to the seven churches (Rev. 1:11).....Local
92. The seven stars of angels of the seven churches (Rev. 1:20) .....Local
93. The seven lamp-stands are the seven churches (Rev. 1:20) .....Local
94. The church in Ephesus (Rev. 2:1).....Local
95. Hear what the Spirit says to the Churches (Rev. 2:7) .....Local
96. The church in Smyrna (Rev. 2:8).....Local
97. Hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev. 2:11) .....Local
98. The church in Pergamum (Rev. 2:12).....Local

99. Hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev. 2:17) .....Local
100. The church in Thyatira (Rev. 2:18).....Local
101. All the churches shall know (Rev. 2:23).....Local
102. Hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev. 2:29) .....Local
103. The church in Sardis (Rev. 3:1).....Local
104. Hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev. 3:6) .....Local
105. The church in Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7).....Local
106. Hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev. 3:13) .....Local
107. The church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14).....Local
108. Hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev. 3:22) .....Local
109. Testify to you these things in the churches (Rev. 22:16) .....Local

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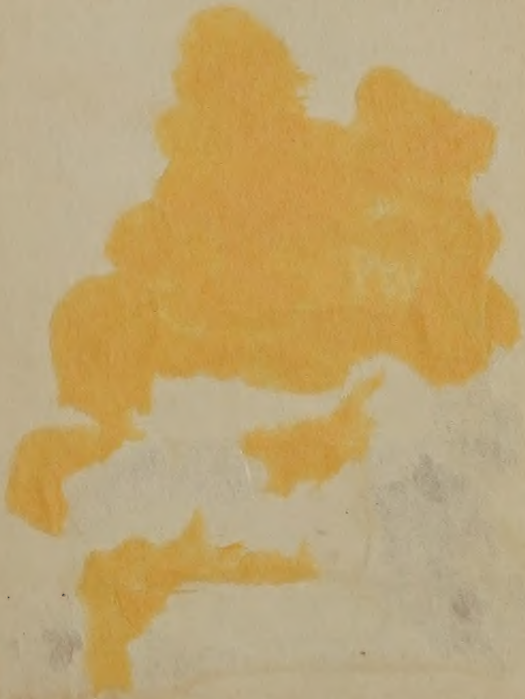

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